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CONTENTS

NOTES OF THE WEEK	... 313
LEADING ARTICLES:	
Milked!	... 316
De Mortuis and "Debunk"	... 317
MIDDLE ARTICLES:	
A Letter From Geneva. From	
Our Special Correspondent	... 318
Ahmed-Beg Zogu	... 318
Cricket Problems in 1928	... 319
The Meads and Prussians	... 321
Sir Roger de Coverley at Kew	322
No Complaints. By Gerald	
Gould	... 323

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...	324
THE THEATRE:	
Lovely Ladies. By Ivor Brown	325
LITERARY COMPETITIONS:	
Set by Gerald Bullett	... 326
BACK NUMBERS—XC	... 328
REVIEWS:	
Interviewing Goethe. By	
Edward Shanks	... 329
Dialogues and Monologues	... 330
The Third Republic	... 330
The Land Pirates of India	... 331

REVIEWS—continued	
Under the South	... 332
The Station	... 333
NEW FICTION. By L. P. Hartley:	
A Brood of Ducklings	... 334
St. Christopher's Day	... 334
The Hasty Marriage	... 334
The Triumph of Youth...	334
SHORTER NOTICES	... 336
ACROSTICS	... 336
MOTORING	... 339
THE CITY	... 340

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NOTES OF THE WEEK

SIR WILLIAM JOYNSON-HICKS must regretfully be classed among the Ministers who would welcome a less laborious office. The Home Secretaryship is a post that in many ways presents more anxieties, as coming in closer contact with the daily life of the nation, than any other in the Cabinet. Sir William at times has needlessly aggravated those anxieties by offering himself as a target and making gratuitous excursions into no-man's land. But he has been a painstaking and earnest Minister, with a knack of receiving indulgence almost as a right. His almost saucy defence of himself the other day, to the effect that every Minister should make an indiscreet speech now and again, was quite Disraelian. If, in the inevitable Cabinet shuffle, he has to recline on a less prominent office, the country will be rid of a nuisance, but will miss his blithe resilience.

At the same time the need, of which he is conscious, for an office not quite so strenuous, emphasizes the wisdom of an early announcement of the coming Cabinet changes. Mr. Baldwin has more than once confessed himself a simpleton in political tactics. His simplicity,

which in any case is more feigned than real, would have to be virginal innocence if he did not foresee, and at once proceed to act upon, the advisability of letting the country know as soon as possible what sort of a Cabinet it might expect from him after the next General Election. When the Party conference is out of the way and an intelligible stand has been taken one way or the other on Protection and its fashionable alias of the moment, the Prime Minister's obvious and unpleasant duty will be to bring his Cabinet into line with present-day realities. A shirking of this obligation will only bewilder the electorate without helping the Government.

The most interesting feature of this year's general debate in the League of Nations Assembly has been the entire lack of grandiloquent speeches. The truth is that the Kellogg Pact has left delegates a little bewildered. They have talked a lot about peace, but they have never dared to envisage it. Now that it seems definitely possible to achieve it they are puzzled, but they have enough realism in their compositions to appreciate the fact that platitudes would be out of place. It is this feature which made M. Briand's speech a disappointment to so many people. It was the least thrilling speech he has ever made in Geneva, but it was also the most honest. Whatever in it

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was most likely to provoke high feeling was mitigated by M. Briand's subsequent utterances to representatives of the Press; and, before that, the sober and reasoned speech by Lord Cushendun had done a good deal to clear a somewhat highly charged atmosphere. What remained and remains is the question: Why was M. Briand moved to an exceptional bluntness in describing the resources of Germany?

The first opinions in Germany on M. Briand's speech have naturally been unfavourable, for there seemed to be no reason why the Germans should be lectured so severely in the Assembly by the representative of the French, who have not hitherto shown an unbounded confidence in the League. But Dr. Hermann Müller, having made himself unpopular among his fellow Socialists by his attitude on the German cruiser question, had shown a tendency in his Assembly speech to play to the Socialist gallery, and there is no place for party politics in Geneva. Despite this speech, Germany has no reason to feel she has suffered a diplomatic defeat in Geneva. Indeed, the report that reparations and the evacuation of the Rhineland are to be discussed "along parallel lines" is all in Germany's favour. She has nothing to lose by any move to decide the total of her reparations, and if she can link up a "commercialization" of this debt with the evacuation, so much the better for her.

There has recently been a revival of interest in the United States in the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, and Senator Capper has tabled a resolution calling for a reconsideration of the reservations which have hitherto kept America outside. Obviously the Kellogg Pact will call for juridical and political bodies to deal with international disputes and, equally obviously, the existing Court is suitable for the settlement of quarrels coming in the former category. From that point of view the election, by the League's Assembly and Council, of Mr. Charles Evans Hughes as a judge on this Court is a master-stroke of diplomacy. It is quite impossible to believe that the choice of so distinguished an American citizen will be without effect. How the Kellogg Pact is to be made instrumental in the case of political disputes has yet to be seen: it would cause no surprise if the United States were to sign the Court's statute, and so perfect the machinery for dealing with juridical disputes, within the next twelve months.

For the past five months of this year British exports have shown an unbroken increase. The August figures confirm and continue a rise which not even the pessimists can regard as a bad sign. With a total foreign commerce of £170,000,000 a month, or thereabouts, it is sheer myopia to regard Britain as done for, either industrially or commercially. The eight months of the year for which the returns are now complete disclose an "adverse balance"—for what that mythical accountancy calculation is worth—some £22,000,000 less than in the same

period of last year, and nearly £40,000,000 less than for the first two-thirds of 1926. Moreover, the heavy industries are at last giving fairly constant signs of recovery. These are not conclusive symptoms, but they justify hopefulness and they are at least a testimony to the fighting qualities of our merchants and traders. A physician of commerce would feel that he was not risking much in pronouncing the invalid's strength to be well maintained.

With all our army of civil servants engaged on registering, docketing and organizing labour, little is done to tidy up the scandals of the hopping season. Last April the Medical Officer of Health for Kent issued warnings about the dangers of the insanitary hutments and camps into which the visiting families are packed. His prophecy of danger has come all too true. This year the hoppers have been attacked by diphtheria and scarlet-fever in the hop-fields, and now a case of small-pox has been notified. Voluntary hospitals and Red Cross dispensaries are having a busy time despite the fine weather. One cause of the trouble is that rural district councils do not enforce the by-laws suggested by the Ministry of Health. If Kentish people do not trouble to defend themselves against dangers of infection, perhaps nothing can be done. But the Ministries of Labour and Health between them should be able to stimulate local pride and prudence into saving the garden of England from becoming at the end of every summer an insanitary slum.

Glasgow has continued to resound with the oratory of the British Association, and the Press has eagerly taken up some rather cryptic remarks made by Professor Donnan on the cellular researches of Dr. A. V. Hill. Immediately there was much trumpeting about "the secret of life" and prophecies of enormous discoveries to come. But the men of science appear to be more modest than the men who turn their hints into headlines. Professor Donnan, according to one report, concluded with the statement that "the mystery of life would remain, for the facts and theories of science were more mysterious at present than in the days of Aristotle." This seems sufficiently to discount the journalistic suggestion that in sugar and formaldehyde appearing on the surface of inorganic compounds lies the riddle of the universe, a riddle shortly to be solved by the application of more microscopes to more sugar and more formaldehyde. After all, if the sugar does yield its buried secret at last, some people will continue to wonder who and what put it there. The finding of answers to riddles does not explain why the riddle was ever made.

Sir John Simon is thoroughly justified in inviting the Viceroy to complete the Central Legislature's Committee which is to work with the Indian Statutory Commission. The Council of State agreed some time ago to appoint its part of the Committee, and now its leader, Sir Mahomed Habibullah, has tabled a motion for the election of three members. The Assembly,

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on the other hand, and despite the dawn of sanity in most of the provincial legislatures, has continued obdurate. Since it will not bodily co-operate, the obvious alternative is for the Viceroy to nominate members out of that section of it which is willing to work with the Commission. The work of the Commission must go forward, and if it has to be carried on without the assistance of the extremists, the responsibility is theirs. In pursuance of their usual absurd policy, the extremists have protested that Sir John Simon's proposal violates the Constitution. But the committees have no constitutional status at all. The Commission was under no obligation to call them into being, and they are merely means of conveniently ascertaining Indian opinion, so far as it is represented in the various legislatures. It was open to the Commission to summon assistance from individual Indians without the least reference to membership of the legislatures.

The theatre, continually alleged to be on its death-bed, continues to trouble the registrar of births rather than the statisticians of mortality. If it be argued that the death-bed of drama is the big central playhouse, it can be replied that, whatever may be happening to the grandiose four-poster, new cots and camp-beds are continually being needed. There are four new theatres planned in the middle of London, and the suburbs, which lost many playhouses to the films, are now building afresh for themselves. On Tuesday the Hampstead Conservatoire at Swiss Cottage became a new and handsome theatre where the rites of repertory are not to be observed either in austerity of surrounding or hurried change of programme. Plays are to run till they drop, and the first production was good enough to suggest duration if only the Hampstead playgoers can be persuaded that it is not necessary to travel into town to get good entertainment. A new playhouse at Streatham is to be opened later on, and the Everyman will shortly start another season. Is it too much to expect a revival of local pride in playgoers? If we cannot have a Napoleon of Notting Hill, why not a Kean of Kennington and a Siddons of Shepherd's Bush?

Last week-end Flatford Mill became formally a national possession, and the nation should indeed be grateful to the Ipswich family of Parkington for its unostentatious and well-planned generosity. The plan is not merely to preserve the mill as a memorial to John Constable, but to use it and the cottage which he made so famous as a guest-house and workshop for artists and students. Moreover, a scheme of scholarships has been instituted to enable students to use this benefaction and to practise the art of landscape in the lovely and tranquil surroundings which Constable described as the creator of his art. As a nation we are terribly slow to take any corporate action either for the defence of our vanishing countryside or for the recognition of art as a necessity in a civilized community. Fortunately the individual occasionally does what the State neglects to do. One cannot imagine a local patriotism better employed than in such deeds as that of Mr. Parkington.

The last of the classics was decided at Doncaster on Wednesday and resulted, amid universal congratulations from all outside "the ring," in the St. Leger being won by Lord Derby's Fairway. It has been a season memorable in the history of the Turf for two reasons. One is that it has witnessed, and survived, the culmination of almost all the adverse forces that seemed for a while to be driving horse-racing into an eclipse. The other is that, with the Totalisator about to be introduced on every English racecourse and with the idea at last fully grasped that racing must be made cheaper and less uncomfortable to hold its own against certain pushing, if ephemeral, rivals, all the executives of the various racecourses have become converted to the necessity of far-reaching reforms. We are famous as a nation for the perfection with which our sporting events are usually arranged. We are particularly famous for our horse-racing. It is quite time that these two reputations joined hands to make the British turf a model for the whole world.

The National Federation of Merchant Tailors has passed a resolution recommending the shortening of credit. Before the war, such a resolution would have struck several hundred men about town with dismay, but now who cares? The cultivation of personal elegance is for men a lost art, for even where post-war poverty has not made it impossible aspirants to it are disheartened by the rapidity with which the modes of Savile Row are reproduced, in an exaggerated form, by the young men who own motor cycles, shine on suburban tennis courts, add to the friskiness of third-rate night clubs, and adorn the promenades of seaside resorts. The most ambitious of the *jeunesse demi-dorée* are now content to dress, if not within their own means, at least within their tailor's. They would blush to wear what their tailors cannot afford, and will readily accommodate themselves to the changed circumstances of those who array them.

The talking robot is with us, and the newspapers are lyrical over every aspect of this ingenious invention except the political. Yet it is politically that the mechanical man will be found most convenient. He is precisely what party organizers have long, ardently, and secretly desired, and we have no doubt that the Whips of the near future will be chosen from among engineers expert in driving these creatures into the Aye and No lobbies. Spared the trouble of arguing with recalcitrant live supporters, of coaxing, threatening and bribing them, they will have no more to do, when a robot jibs, than to oil a joint or tighten a screw. Rejoicings over the outlook must be tempered with pity for the near-robots already in the legislature; but, as the saying goes, the good is the enemy of the best, and they must make way for their betters. The interests of individuals must be subordinated to those of the nation, which as it lives more and more mechanically can best be represented by mechanism.

MILKED!

BRITISH agriculture, or at least the dairying section of it, has been made during the past fortnight to cut a lamentable figure. It is at odds, it is at daggers drawn, with the distributing companies that retail to the average citizen the milk they purchase from the farmers wholesale. A matter of seven-twelfths of a penny per gallon is what appears to be in dispute between them. In each individual case this unimpressive sum may not amount to much; in the aggregate it runs not merely to thousands and hundreds of thousands, but to millions. If they do not get it, the farmers declare they will withhold supplies from the retailers and attempt to organize the distribution of milk themselves. If they do get it, the companies declare that all their profits will be wiped out.

The public is familiar with the type of industrial dispute in which facts, or anything approaching facts, seem to get bombed out of existence in a whirl of statements and denials, charges and counter-charges. On not one single point of the recent past or of present conditions or of future probabilities do the spokesmen in this controversy find it convenient to agree. The public therefore has derived little from their disputations except a renewed sense of the complexity of all modern business, and a gathering suspicion, the fruit of experience, that when the contestants do finally lie down in peace it will be at the consumer's expense. There are some champions of this predestined victim of all industrial quarrels, and of most industrial reconciliations, who maintain that whatever the outcome of the clash between milk producers and milk distributors, the retail price of milk must not be raised. These valiant assertions are paid the tribute of a wry smile. Well inured to their buffer position, people are grimly aware of what to expect. They expect to be milked and they are most unlikely to be disappointed.

It is the farmers, naturally enough, who carry the general sympathies. They are pictured as struggling, more or less isolated individuals who have had a succession of bad seasons and are now fighting a deeply entrenched commercial organization for the right to produce at a profit. The companion picture is that of a wealthy combine, exploiting a vital product, controlling all the channels of distribution, and paying handsome dividends by charging the public as much, and giving the producer as little, as it can. But no dispassionate enquirer will endorse this as a just representation of the functions and services of the dairy companies. On the contrary he will pronounce them, first of all, to be a link in the marketing of milk that the farmers themselves, by their negligence and lack of enterprise, have made indispensable. Secondly, he will say of them that, in London at any rate, they have brought into existence

an organization that distributes milk more efficiently, in purer form, and more expeditiously than it is distributed in any other capital in the world. The services rendered to the community by these great purchasing and retailing organizations, not only in providing the farmer with a steady all-the-year-round market, but in improving the standard of the milk supply and ensuring its wholesomeness, have been and still are and will continue to be deserving of ungrudging recognition.

The only possible alternative to their operations is that the farmers themselves should be so organized as to control, like any other body of manufacturers, the merchandizing of their own products. An interesting paper was read on Monday to the British Association on the Scottish Milk Agency. This organization has a membership of 1,400 individual producers. To it are affiliated sixteen co-operative creameries which the farmers of the district have started themselves. The Agency controls 75 per cent. of the milk that enters Glasgow and the Clyde valley, and passes through its books some two million gallons a month. Such an organization gives the farmer what in England he has lost, if indeed he ever possessed it—a bargaining power equal to that of the buyer. The Scottish Milk Agency does not enter the distributing field. It leaves that highly technical business to those who have proved their competence to develop it. But it works with and through the dairy companies on terms of equality and in a spirit that has become one of hearty co-operation.

This is a model that English farmers, so admirable in production, so unbusiness-like in the disposal of their products, should hasten to imitate. Within the last fortnight there have been signs that here and there, in this county and in that, the farmers have been trying to get together a scratch organization to carry on the work of milk distribution after October 1. A flurried gesture of this kind deludes no one, least of all the dairy companies whom it is meant to frighten into concessions. What is needed is not these last-minute improvisations which are paraded only to impress the opposition, but a deep study, county by county, of the extent to which farmers by combination may either do business with the local distributing agencies on level terms or may take into their own hands the direct marketing of milk and other products.

That need will remain even when the present "crisis" is composed, as it will be composed. It is, indeed, symptomatic of what is the fundamental and dominating need in all departments of British agriculture. Technically excellent in all matters of raising both crops and stock, and with a wealthy and expanding market at their very doors, our farmers, who should be the most prosperous in Europe, are among the most depressed. There are many reasons why that is so, and some of them are beyond the farmers' power to alter. But two at least are well within their own control. When it is said of British agriculture that it is still obsessed with political panaceas, and that it has neglected to modernize its methods partly of production but chiefly of distribution and marketing, two shortcomings are indicated that must be remedied before "our greatest industry" can be put in the way of health.

DE MORTUIS AND "DEBUNK "

A POPULAR pastime of these years is the composition of biography without admiration or affection, sometimes even with positive spleen. There is an excuse which can be put forward in defence of this habit. When eminent persons die, obituary comments are often so courteous and so politely misleading in their omissions that realistic observers can only remark: *De mortuis, nil nisi bunkum*. The eventual and almost inevitable reaction takes the form of subsequent aspersion as violent in misuse of emphasis as was the grave-side eulogy. We are now passing through the period when the great Victorians are submitted one by one to the process of black-washing; it will be the Edwardians' turn before long. The process of reconsideration, if done by scholars and gentlemen, is entirely salutary. But the job soon passes from the scholar to the "stuntsman." Hero-worship, instead of being mitigated with judgment, is simply translated by pert young people into hero-smashing of a most infantile kind. What the Americans call "debunking" becomes an orgy of detractions which sensational papers quote by the column in "news reviews." Thus the revision of personal estimates, which is fully justified by the learning and irony of Mr. Lytton Strachey and rather less so by the rattle of Mr. Guedalla's epigrams, can be finally degraded into a mere competition on the literary dirt-track.

The Gladstone case is recent history. Now Charles Dickens is under fire. The book by "Ephesian," which has caused some angry discussion, is not of much importance. By presenting the life of Dickens in the form of a novel with dialogue which those may believe in who can, the author only comes up for criticism as a writer of fiction. His book is not documented nor is it particularly cruel. Everybody knew that Forster's famous *Life* was extremely reticent about certain aspects of the novelist's behaviour, and "Ephesian" has only tilted the balance by laying emphasis on the sufferings of his wife and by suggesting that the great campaigner against humbug could offend grievously in that direction. What is important is not whether "Ephesian" is right or wrong, since that is a question of private relationships which can never be settled. By what possibility can we have all the evidence for adjudicating on the details of domestic disharmony? Why, if we have any right feeling, should we snatch at such scraps of record or hearsay as remain? To invade these privacies is none of our business, and to hunt for the Pecksniff in Dickens is surely to go in danger of Pecksniffian weakness ourselves. It is not our business to survey the privy concerns of the great as though we were pedagogues with conduct marks to allot. Charles, Maria, Mary, Kate, Georgina, Ellen—they have all gone. The dead must bury their dead. Pickwick and Pecksniff remain and are alive. That is what matters.

The real complaint against the "debunking" of the great is that it stimulates an advocacy which depends on false emphasis. Let us leave Charles Dickens out of the question. Take an imaginary creator and suppose that he was tumultuous at

times, impulsive, capricious, theatrical, vain; the "debunker" insists on these all too human qualities until we begin to forget that they are the merest trifles compared with the fact of his creation. To history what matters is largeness, the power to make that which has endured. Willingly do we admit that this is, or should be, a platitude. Yet it is the vice of our period to ignore it and to think more of the tea-table than the desk, more of the marriage-bed than of the Parliament. The itch for scribbling is intensely aggravated by an itch for probing into privacies.

It was not always so. We should indeed be grateful to the Elizabethans had they written more of themselves and of each other. But that was not their way: they had larger matters to consider. Nowadays curiosity is monarch of all that ought not to be surveyed. The Press prompts it and gorges it. It is deemed far more important to know a great artist's taste in cocktails than the secret of his artistic method. The repulsive thing is the way in which supply meets the demand. No sooner has any sort of eminence been achieved than greatness puts its memory on sale. A notable or notorious personage flings his intimacies on the counter, and then he can play auctioneer with all Fleet Street as bidders. It is true that the happy salesman gives himself away as he disposes of the goods; the great figures of the war have nearly all "debunked" themselves by now. The newspapers are tossed in a constant fever of "unmasking" this and "revealing" that. The public appetite grows by what it feeds on; it does not want to learn of high enterprise—unless it can be boomed "a record"—or of achievement unless it can be featured for a day as another marvel of modern science. All the time what it would most keenly devour is some tittle-tattle which bears no possible relation to the great thing done.

With public opinion thus continually poisoned it is only natural that the making of history should become increasingly a process of sensational portraiture whose raw materials are diaries and private letters. Sometimes such research yields matters of public importance; more often it only feeds an unmannerly curiosity, raises false issues, and starts vulgar and interminable controversies. What an irony it is that our generation, which prides itself on having left Victorian moralism far behind, should be so inflamed by the moral issue when it discusses the great Victorians! (Charles Dickens, incidentally, lived with his wife far longer than is fashionable nowadays.) But worse than any humbug which attends our hunting of humbugs is the preoccupation with personalities, about which certain knowledge is impossible even if it were desirable. When somebody announces astounding new discoveries about Keats or Shelley, we know well enough that these tit-bits will have nothing to do with poetry; to unearth a new play of Shakespeare's would be less regarded than the throwing of new light on dark lady or gentleman-friend. Hero-worship leads often enough to a dreary hypocrisy, but the opposite process, now in violent vogue, can play far more fantastic and pernicious tricks. Paul Pry digs his nose so deep into the trivial that he is wholly incapable of seeing the tremendous.

A LETTER FROM GENEVA

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT]

ONE of these days the League of Nations will have adequate buildings of its own. Money with which to build them has been saved up carefully from year to year, a competition with some of the world's best-known architects as the jury has already been held—with unfortunate results, it is true, since they chose several winners instead of one, and, further, gave prizes to designs which would cost far more to carry out than the sum available—and property has been acquired near the edge of the lake. But bad luck dogs the League's footsteps in this respect. With great difficulty a committee of amateurs finished the job of the jury, and chose one design, slightly modified by proposals from the other principal prize winners. Now, people said, the builders can get busy. But then came a new and welcome cause of delay. Mr. John D. Rockefeller (whose son, by the way, is now holding a temporary post in the League Secretariat) astonished everyone by giving £400,000 for the construction of a new library, and the site was no longer large enough for the Assembly Hall, the Secretariat and the Library. That is all right, people said, they can buy the villa next door, and then they will have a splendid site. And so they would, had the owner of the villa next door not refused to sell. She is an English woman, Mrs. Barton, whose husband in his lifetime did a great deal for Geneva, so that the Swiss have not yet dared to expropriate her. On her death, she promises, the property will be offered to the League at a very modest price, but while she is alive she intends to stay there. "J'y suis, j'y reste" becomes her motto.

And there the matter stands. That part of the new site which is already in the League's possession is serving a useful and pleasant purpose. It is a bathing club for members of the League Secretariat and the International Labour office, sister organizations which in the past have had shamefully little to do with each other. Meanwhile the League has to carry on. Most of the apartment houses near the Hotel National, which has been the home of the Secretariat ever since it left London in 1920, have been taken over for office purposes, and an ugly bridge across the road connects them with the main building. Since last June the famous Glass Room, where the Council meetings are held, has been more than doubled in size. And various efforts have been made to improve the acoustic properties and the ventilation of the hideous Salle de la Reformation, a mile away on the other side of the Lake, where the Assembly has to meet. Even the Genevise are, at long last, beginning to discuss the advisability of a little town-planning in the quarter which, according to one old gentleman who wanders around with leaflets on the subject, is destined to become "Mundaneum." At present the quarter is ugly enough to merit such a name.

Although the League thus goes on from year to year in temporary and very inadequate premises, one has the feeling that in other ways the period of transition is over. The thing is taken more or less for granted. There are, it is true, more American visitors than ever, but they no longer resort to bribery and corruption to obtain tickets of admission. Indeed, there would be no need to do so, for the public galleries are generally half empty. There have been, this year, none of those attractive, stirring, but useless flights of rhetoric which bring sentimental busybodies from all parts of the world. The general debate on the work of the past year, generally the occasion for great competition among orators, nearly fizzled out altogether, since on the first day nobody expressed a desire to speak although the President, M. Zahle, of Denmark, begged them, with tears in his voice, to

come forward. But when the debate did begin, it was far more useful one than its predecessors, for the speakers criticized more than they praised. Patting on the back was an encouraging form of exercise, while the League felt uncertain of its future, but without that uncertainty it is a waste of time.

The criticism is directed, and rightly so, mainly against the Council which, by nature of its size, must inevitably be the League's executive body. Ever since Sir Austen Chamberlain's rash promise to Spain and Poland that they should have permanent seats on the Council as soon as Germany did, that body has lost its faculty of reaching rapid decisions. To a certain extent the presence of Germany in the League accounts for this since Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy now carry on, in the League, intrigues—or may we hope that that is too strong a word?—which were hitherto carried on elsewhere. But the Council, now that it has fourteen members, is an unwieldy body, and the arrangement for the re-election of certain nations at the end of their period of three years at the Council table is a thoroughly unsatisfactory one. Poland and Spain now enjoy this privileged position, their claim having been backed, for personal reasons, by the Great Powers. They may deserve the privilege, but the smaller nations are jealous and disgruntled. The very existence of this system of semi-permanent seats leads to a lot of mutual back-scratching which does much harm and no good to the Geneva organization.

But despite feeling against the Council the present session is an encouraging one. People are apt to say that the Kellogg Pact will make no difference. They would cease to say this if they were in Geneva: there it has already had an excellent effect. Problems of security, arbitration and disarmament are no longer looked upon as insoluble. They are not going to be solved in a day, as incurable sentimentalists still imagine, but they may be solved in a decade. At least, this is the general opinion. Of individual opinions there is only one which I, in company with every other journalist in Geneva, would like to know (and, of course, to quote). I refer to your ex-collaborator, who stalks about having amusing conversations with M. Briand and any other delegate who seems worth talking to: Mr. George Bernard Shaw.

AHMED BEG ZOGU

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

TO those who from the security of their arm-chair in London can afford to regard Albania as a fairy-land of romance and adventure the career of Ahmed Beg Zogu will make an irresistible appeal. Whatever Ahmed's faults may be, not even his worst enemy can accuse him of lack of courage or deny him the possession of a strong hand. That he should now proclaim himself Mpret of the empire which he has carved out for himself with the sword ought therefore to be the natural and picturesque conclusion of a romantic adventure which, according to the story-book, should end on a note of "happily ever after." Unfortunately, Albania happens to be one of the chief storm-centres in European politics, and there are aspects in Ahmed's latest venture which make a study of his career a matter of some importance even to those Englishmen who are inclined to hail the advent of a new king in Europe as one of the happiest of omens.

Ahmed Beg was born in 1894. He is a member of the noble family of Zogoli, the proud chiefs of the Central Albanian district of Mat. The seat of the family is Burgajet, a fortified castle situated on a mountain overlooking the wild valley of the river

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Mati. In this district, once the home of the famous Albanian hero, Skanderbeg, Ahmed grew up and received the homage of the local tribes. His father died when Ahmed was only seventeen, and the formation of the young man's character was left to his mother, a woman of remarkable shrewdness and herself a member of the powerful Topdan family. The young Ahmed received a good education. Both his father and his grandfather had been Pashas in the Ottoman service, and Ahmed spent three years at the Galata Serail Lyceum in Constantinople. History, which even to-day is his favourite study, was his chief interest, and like most young men who are about to enter on a military career he conceived a lasting admiration for Napoleon. To-day, a portrait of the great Emperor is always on his writing-table. During the war he rendered considerable services to the Austrians, and was rewarded with the command of a battalion and the rank of colonel. In 1917 he was one of a delegation which went to Vienna to thank the Emperor Karl for certain concessions which he had made to the Albanians. Ahmed remained in the Austrian capital for some time, and profited from his stay by learning German, the language which he now employs in his conversations with foreign diplomats.

In personal appearance Ahmed Beg is a fine figure, with aristocratic features and steely blue eyes which, with his long, tapered fingers, certainly convey an outward impression of the cold, relentless cruelty of which his enemies accuse him. By religion he is a Sunni Moslem. He is unmarried, although it is an open secret in Tirana that his "step-brother," Hussein, is his son.

Ahmed's rise to power after the war has been astonishingly rapid. He first came into prominence after the assassination of his uncle, Essad Pasha, in 1920, when his ability as an administrator made him indispensable to the Council of Regents which was then responsible for the government of Albania. He was appointed Minister of the Interior at the age of twenty-six; two-and-a-half years later he became Prime Minister. Himself a big landowner with strongly conservative, not to say autocratic, instincts, he was gradually undermined by the Nationalist Party under the leadership of Fan Noli, an orthodox Bishop, who with Italian support was endeavouring to popularize a democratic programme of which a wide measure of land reform was the chief plank. In May, 1924, the Bishop was strong enough to carry out a *coup d'état*, and Ahmed, whose autocratic methods had made him many enemies, was forced to leave the country. He fled to Yugoslavia, where he was welcomed by the Serbs, chiefly because the Italians were supporting Fan Noli. The Fan Noli regime lasted only seven months. The Bishop had no talents outside his demagogic oratory, and his attempts to carry out his agrarian reforms earned him the bitter hostility of the powerful land-owning nobles. Ahmed, who was watching the situation closely from his Yugoslav retreat, saw his chance, and, supported by a band of his own followers and a party of Russian officers, he entered Tirana in December, 1924, and drove Fan Noli in headlong flight to Italy.

From that day Ahmed has never looked back. After holding fresh elections, he proclaimed Albania a Republic, and had himself elected President for a term of seven years. At the same time he assumed the offices of Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief. With great energy he set about to reorganize the internal administration of the country and to convert his republic into a dictatorship of the most ruthless kind. To maintain himself in power, however, the persecution of his enemies by hanging, by assassination, and by banishment was not enough. He required money to placate his supporters and to pay his elaborate organization of secret police. With a complete *volte-face*, for which the Serbs have

never been able to forgive him, he sold himself to the longer purse. Within eighteen months of his return he had concluded with Mussolini the Treaty of Tirana, and in exchange for the foreign loan which he so sorely needed had prepared the way for the peaceful penetration of his country by Italian Imperialists. To-day, with the approval and consent of his Italian advisers, he has proclaimed himself King.

Such, in brief, is the story of Ahmed's picturesque career. For the moment his position is unassailable. Since Essad Pasha and Ismail Kemal he is by far the strongest personality that has come to the front in Albania in recent years. His ability is admitted by all who have come into contact with him, and it is possible that, like King Nikita of Montenegro, he may be clever enough to obtain subsidies from foreign powers and yet retain unimpaired the independence of his country. But even to-day the shadows are gathering round his throne. Already he is not so energetic as he was. He is extravagant and luxury-loving, and to pay for his love of display he has had to rely on Italian backing. The hand of Italy now lies heavy on the land. Italian concession-hunters invade his capital. Italian instructors train his army. An Italian-controlled bank prints the notes and mints the coins which bear his effigy, and an Italian minister watches over his foreign policy.

Italian support has made his position secure, but the treaty of Tirana may yet produce repercussions far beyond his control, and the day may come when Ahmed himself and, to a still greater degree, his countrymen, will bitterly regret the hold they have allowed the Italians to obtain over their country. Then, too, although he has crushed all organized opposition, the fear of assassination is always present. He cannot move without a bodyguard. The blood he has shed cries for vengeance, and in a country like Albania, where the vendetta has existed since time immemorial, the hand of the assassin will not be stayed because its would-be victim has assumed a royal crown. The last chapter in Ahmed's romance has not yet been written. It may have a finish very different from the orthodox ending of a Weyman or a Sabatini novel.

CRICKET PROBLEMS IN 1928

AT the moment of my writing, those precious documents, the season's averages (I speak not ironically) have not yet taken their final form. But it does not much matter. Two batsmen have made over 3,000 runs this year, and one or two more may still rival them. It is not certain whether one, two, three or more may not still join the round score who have made over two thousand runs. The point to be observed is that the record number of men scoring two thousand runs in a season has hitherto been twelve, and it is a matter of small importance whether the record is beaten by ten or by twelve. We should not pay too much attention to records or averages in cricket, but they are a recognized point of the game and are always, when intelligently analysed, instructive as to the game's tendencies.

This year they unmistakably inform us that more than ever the batsman is the master of the bowler. In earlier years, indeed in much earlier years, there have been individual batsmen who have had all bowlers at their mercy. Even now Hayward's record aggregate has not been challenged and it is long since the year that saw three men each with 3,000 runs to his name. But in that season, if my memory serves me as it should, not more than four or five others reached so high as the two thousand. One trembles if one begins to think what Fry, Hayward, Tyldesley, "Ranji" might not have accomplished in a season which sees that formerly

notable feat performed twenty-odd times. We do not live in an age of great batsmen, though, to be sure; for want of adequate testing, we cannot tell how great our best batsmen might be. We do live in an age when batsmen whom previous generations would have considered little better than mediocre are allowed to appear distinguished.

This situation might be more tolerable if there were something gallant, audacious, even tyrannical, in the bearing of the dominant class. But the batsmen rule the bowlers with the stuffy primness of bureaucrats, not with the breezy arrogance of a warrior caste. Hobbs himself has this season put forward an apology for dull batting which is all the more horrifying because of the element of truth that it undoubtedly contains. Once upon a time, he tells us, batsmen made an effort to score off the middling good ball, because they knew that sooner or later down would come a ball impossible to play and that would be the end of them. Nowadays they content themselves with seeing to it that the middling good ball does them no harm, knowing that the only other kind certain to come is that from which no one could fail to score without taking any risk. O times! O manners! If this be true (and it is in some degree true) how shall we distinguish between batsmen and bowlers or do anything but lump them together in a common and blasting condemnation? It must be admitted, however, that the best way of seeking a solution lies in looking at the problem from the bowler's end. He is not so dangerous as he used to be. He must be made more dangerous. How?

To this question there are several answers, most of them based on the idea of making the batsman more vulnerable, e.g., by altering the leg-before rule or by adding a fourth stump. The second of these proposals seems to me to be impracticable if we are to take it as axiomatic (and I think we must) that any change will have to be applied equally to all classes of cricket. In the village game, each side, were the wider wicket adopted, would need as many innings as are played in a baseball match merely to fill in one Saturday afternoon. The same argument is used against the alteration of the leg-before rule but not, in my opinion, with the same strength—for this simple reason, that the proposed new rule, only in a much more drastic shape, is now, and always has been, in force on the village-green. If you hit the batsman and appeal, a fair-minded umpire will give him out, regardless of where the ball pitched and where it was going afterwards. Some years ago, in such a match, I inadvertently hit a rather stout batsman with a full pitch to the stomach. I was bowling left-hand round the wicket and, though the ball might conceivably have been said to have pitched between wicket and wicket, no one in his right senses could have supposed that it would have hit the stumps. Nevertheless, in a spirit of purely scientific curiosity, I appealed, and thus took the last wicket with which my analysis will ever be credited. It may be urged that the custom of the village green is not followed in good club and school cricket. I would reply that here more than anywhere else the batsman who makes a practice of "covering-up" is a nuisance and ought to be eliminated.

To my mind, the gravest objection to altering the leg-before rule is that it will cause an appalling commotion in the politics of the game and, in the long run, no great difference in the playing of it. The modern batsman regards his pads as having this advantage over the bat as a weapon of defence, that he cannot possibly be caught off them. His use of them is generally an excess of caution which the law allows and which therefore, since safety is the only thing, he faithfully observes. But if he were deprived of them, he would probably soon learn to get

along as safely and as dully as before. He would have to invent one or two new defensive strokes for use against leg-breaks and that would be all.

The only real remedy consists in somehow, by hook or by crook, inducing the bowler to bowl better. Here something could be done by mitigating the perfection of modern pitches—if only some practical horticultural formula were available that could be applied to all grounds. In the absence of this, we might very reasonably, as Lord Ullswater has suggested, forbid the batsman to bang the turf about with his bat. It is quite irrational to allow him to do this and at the same time to lift our hands in horror when a bowler endeavours to keep the seam of the ball in its original prominence with the help of his thumb-nail.

But let us not suppose that the weakness of the modern bowler arises entirely from conditions outside his control. If the batsman has fallen in love with staying in to the neglect of his primary business, the scoring of runs, the bowler has equally fallen in love with not having runs scored off him to the neglect of his primary business, which is taking wickets. The fetish of the maiden over is as disastrous as the fetish of the century. All very well if the batsman has had six balls which have demanded from him all he knows to keep them out of his wicket. But if the over consists of six balls which, if the batsman has enough restraint to leave them alone (and our modern champions are plentifully endowed with that questionable virtue), might as well have been delivered in the next county, then the better name for it would be, not maiden but *demi-vierge*. Both bowlers and batsmen are at fault. The essence of batting is getting the ball away for runs: the essence of bowling is threatening the stumps.

The misery into which our bowling has declined is, along with some other things, demonstrated by the M.C.C. team for Australia. Certain critics affect to regard Leyland as an addition to the bowling strength of the side. Leyland is a good bat and a fine field and he can, on occasion, "put his arm over"; but to speak of him as a bowler when we are talking about Test matches verges on the ludicrous. His own county, which could very well do with another good bowler, rarely uses him, or ever has used him, in that capacity. If one is to make any sense at all of the seventeen men selected, then Hammond will be the fifth bowler we shall take into the field and the nearest approach we shall have to a genuine all-rounder. But though he is a useful man with the ball he can hardly be considered the equal of Hirst, Jackson or Braund, or even of Arnold or Relf, any more than Tate can be considered the equal of these or of F. R. Foster with the bat. The long and short of it is that, if Larwood does not take wickets (and he is the greatest gamble in the team) then Tate will have an appalling amount of work to do, with Hammond and Geary or Staples to rest him, and Freeman or White for a contrast. Our main consolation and hope lie in the fact that the Australians seem to be no less despondent about their own bowling.

The M.C.C. team may very well win the rubber: there is no need to be despondent in advance. But it is not a very inspiring collection and I find it hard to understand on what principles it was chosen. It is a bad thing, in the first place, to take seventeen men: with six to be left out of each of only twenty matches or so, several will not get a proper chance and will be in danger of growing discontented and rusty. In the second place, when it comes to Test matches, of the four batsmen, Tyldesley, Hendren, Mead and Jardine, places surely cannot be found for more than two—unless, with the extraordinary optimism that nowadays seems to affect us, Mead is once again to be reckoned an all-rounder. (For that

matter Hobbs can bowl and has taken his hundred first-class wickets in the course of a quarter of a century.) In the third place, if Hobbs breaks down, Sutcliffe is the only other man in the side accustomed to being one of a first pair.

Freeman's inclusion has been criticized on the ground that he was a failure in Australia in 1924-25. But on this season's performance he could hardly have been left out. To break a bowling record that has stood for thirty-three years in a season when aggregates of two thousand have been as common as blackberries, really does mean something.

This, the West Indian fast bowlers, and Constantine's hitting have been the most pleasing feature of the season. Constantine reached his zenith in the match against Middlesex. His triumph there and the praise he received for it rather unsettled him and he began over-confidently hitting at balls which were not those sent down to him. But before that happened he gave our players and our crowds a useful lesson. What he has taught us is the value and attractiveness of continually trying to make runs. If more of our batsmen would adopt this method and more of our bowlers attempt to hit the stumps, cricket would at once revive like a drooping plant in a shower.

L. B. W.

THE MEADS AND PRUSSIANS

THE grimmest of all fairy tales about Germany is that it is a land where everything is *verboten*. *Verboten* was a word that before the war and during it was held up to Englishmen as a symbol of bureaucratic tyranny in Europe. They were given to understand that in Germany the suppression of personal freedom and the reign of petty tyranny had reached their fine flower. Whatever may have been true before the war—and it is improbable that a national characteristic, if it was one, would have been completely changed by defeat and the abdication of the Kaiser—it is certainly not true to-day that English liberty finds its opposite in Germany. To the casual observer knowing something of what has been happening to English liberty since the war, Germany seems in certain respects a paradise of the free. It is the fashion for Englishmen returned from a week-end in Boulogne, who cross to find themselves too late for a whisky-and-soda at Victoria, to applaud Gallic *laissez-faire* at the expense of British licensing laws. And, of course, they are right, though there is much in France of which it may be said that they order these things better in England. But that Germany, the *verboten* country, should be able to teach Englishmen a lesson in liberty has a rather savage irony. In Germany one finds the best of both worlds: the orderliness of the English with the freedom of the French. Here is liberty without licence, and, where there is a licence, one has it far less frequently endorsed.

Before I left England recently I happened to read in an evening paper the report of a case at Marlborough Street Police Court. A young man of twenty-five, unemployed and looking for work, was charged before Mr. Mead with wandering in Hyde Park without visible means of subsistence. In other words, the poor fellow, being without cash, had preferred the grass of Hyde Park to the casual ward—and I, for one, do not blame him. Mr. Mead blamed him severely. "I do not see," he said, if he was correctly reported (I kept the cutting for reference), "why you should unduly congest the labour market here. . . . It does not conduce to the amenities of the park to turn it into a dormitory." After which superb piece of impertinence he bound the man over on condition that he remained out of London for three years. Englishmen are thereby warned that if they sleep in the free public parks they are liable at the whim of a magistrate to be forcibly exiled from the capital of their country for three years. This pretty example of

tyranny has stuck in my mind while I have been wandering through Germany. I have seen few English newspapers since I left, but I shall be surprised if the Marlborough Street magistrate's action in this case has caused any comment or complaint. The English are growing docile in the face of small oppressions; they are losing the habit of revolt and getting tyranny into their systems.

If this seems a severe statement let any Englishman reflect frankly how he would have clacked his tongue in disapproval and disdain had he been told by the propaganda bureaux during the war that Germans who slept in parks were sentenced to three years' exile. Now, when this happens, not in Germany but in England, it excites no opposition, no anger; only here and there perhaps a resigned smile. Somewhere or other Mr. A. P. Herbert has put it on record that a magistrate, fining for being drunk and disorderly a man of whom it was incidentally stated in evidence that he had been playing darts, remarked that it was high time the game of darts was abolished. When an administrator of English justice can talk like that without remonstrance, it is plain that something serious is happening to the national psychology. To be brow-beaten, tyrannized over, spied upon, interfered with is becoming part of the Englishman's habit of thought. He has lost his freedom of action; he goes in danger of losing his freedom of mind.

The German has not only freedom of action, but also this more important freedom of mind. It is in the smallest ways that the traveller in Germany observes a contrast, but where personal liberty is concerned it is the little things that matter. Contrary to legend, nobody conforms to a standard or expects anyone else to do so. In nothing is this shown more vividly than in the matter of dress. You could walk down the streets of Munich in pyjamas and a bowler hat, and so far from your being arrested few would turn to look at you. Natives and foreigners come and go in Cologne or Karlsruhe, or any of the large industrial towns, which might be expected more than others to be conventional, in the most astonishing variety of costume. Think what would happen to a foreigner if he walked about Birmingham in his native dress, or to an Englishman if he walked down Bond Street in shorts and a rucksack. You may say that this has nothing to do with personal liberty and bureaucratic infiltration and I will tell you flatly that it has. It is the habit of mind that is important in this matter, and a nation that does not raise its eyebrows over the flouting of a convention cannot have tyranny in its soul.

In England if you go boating on the Thames in a bathing suit you are turned off by the lock-keepers, who, under the ægis of the Thames Conservancy Board, have constituted themselves censors of public morals. In Heidelberg the Neckar is crowded with young women in bathing dresses and young men in what are, I believe, called "triangles," steering their canoes unself-consciously about the water. In the afternoons the river-wall is lined with respectable men and women watching the young men, still in "triangles," swimming in the open-air baths that are here roped off from the river, or lying on wooden platforms, like herrings on a slab, hardening their bodies in the sun. I assure the Mrs. Grundys and the magistrates, who would no doubt figure eagerly among the spectators in the inconceivable event of a like performance taking place on an English river, that the effect is not in the least immodest.

In Mainz cathedral, which, as I later discovered, is closed to the public for restoration, I wandered about among the masons without interference for the better part of an hour, and when at last I was approached it was to be requested with the utmost politeness and innumerable bows to conclude my investigations with as much expedition as might be convenient to me, since, after all—with a gesture of deprecation—the building was closed to visitors. A minute incident

certainly, possibly pure chance, but not quite lacking in significance. The foreign observer does not look for arrest, but he looks for the attitude of mind that would be ready to arrest him or to thwart his freedom; or—a stage further in the degeneration of individualism—that would itself be ready to be arrested or have its freedom thwarted. In Germany there is no one to say when you may or may not drink, when you may buy cigarettes or chocolates, what you must wear when you go boating on the river, what you may hear in a theatre or what you may read in a book. There is less regimentation than in England. One sees on all sides signs of bureaucracy, but it is always kept behind a grill: it is a wild beast tamed and caged, not free to play Jungle Jix.

In the cafés and beer gardens frequented by the common people there is a noticeable absence of forced restraint. Women and children sit drinking and eating with their men; there is plenty of music—generally bad music—and everyone sings. It is one of the sights of Cologne just now to see the middle-aged men and women of the *bourgeoisie*, in the restaurants of the Pressa Exhibition, singing choruses and clinking glasses to the popular tunes of the orchestra. It was getting late one evening, and I asked our waiter when they would be closing down. Closing down? He looked at me with surprise. Why, of course they would not be closing down, they would be open all night. I glanced at the crowded room and reflected on the failure of Wembley. Yet with all this I have never seen a drunken person since I have been in the country—and I have kept my eyes especially open for them. On Sundays, the playing fields are busy and I have not so far observed any signs of arrest among boys who strip to the waist for football—a practice that, in the hot weather in which the football season opens, strikes one as being exceedingly sensible. It is in the small things, as I have said, that one observes the contrasts, and there chiefly in an all-important attitude of mind. On a first impression it is a discouraging contrast; experience may modify it. The law of the Prussians appears to be a myth; the law of the Meads is a desperate reality.

G. B.

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY AT KEW

Si rubet, arte rubet.—Ovid.
She blushes, but her blush is art.

IT was very hot and sultry weather at the *Gardens*; sober citizens of advanced age had cast their upper clothes and walked in their shirts and braces, which was a strange sight, and all felt the Power of Heat. I wished for a Troop of *Zephyrs* to fan me with their wings and sought the spreading favour of a beech-tree. As I lay reclined in my covert, I may have drowsed, but I was aware of two figures on a seat near by. One wore a coat and doublet of the fashion of Queen Anne and a wig, which was awry and showed a grey hair or two. His face was dignified, but touched with a humorous sadness. His companion was dressed alike, but smarter and more careful of himself, with a person well turned and a face no longer young, but still tolerably fresh and clear of wrinkles. But methought the more casual in appearance was the greater gentleman of the two, and when he spoke, the other listened with deference.

"The place is much changed, Will, since I first knew it. Hereabouts was no public Haunt, but the seat of my friend Methold, an excellent scholar in divinity. The stone yonder by the Lake still recalls his name."

"Ay, there was a Love Lane dividing his property and the next."

"'Twould be you to remember that; you were ever a profound admirer of the sex. Now the place

is perpetually filled with a promiscuous multitude, and the Fair Ones are conspicuous, since they go kilted like the Spartan girls. You winked at one and another. I fear me you are a wicked man yet, Will. I was never a foe to any rational source of public entertainment; and all must enjoy the serenity of the sky, the lively colours of the *Gardens*, and the long broad Walk of the finest Turf. But 'tis odd; wandering among the beautiful flowers, I admired the roses and pansies and lilies and much else of startling novelty ransacked from every clime (I read with delight the notices on the plants telling of China and America, to which the public pay no attention). But where is that sweet smell which attracted us long ago in the *Spring-Gardens*? Surely here is a plentiful store of *Nature's* entrancing odours, as of Beauty on faces that I warrant to be *English*. Yet there comes to my nostrils no scent of Flowers, but a pervading smell, sweet and a little sickish, which cloyes by perpetual repetition."

"'Tis the girls' Face Powder. You are ignorant of these matters, Sir Roger."

"Pish! These are fresh young girls, that need not the unguents and medicaments of the Town; none of your mincing creatures, fit only for *Drury-Lane* and the *Hay-Market*."

"'Tis even as I say. The smell is of the Powder on every face; and they paint too. Awhile since you gazed hard at a damsel with painted lips of orange."

"Nay, the wanton baggage! I will have naught to do with her!"

"She is as innocent as your sweet self."

"Then she should be herself, what *Nature* designed her. 'Twas a good-looking girl, who had no need of the worst piece of art extant to smite the Male Beholder, and she must needs paint herself. How unlike are these *Picts* to that description Dr. *Domus* gives of his mistress!

*Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one would almost say her body thought.*

"'Tis the fashion, and there is nothing so dominant. In our youth we saw unguents and patches enough. All must follow the lead, and the Ladies would be *incog.* in their own faces. And, look you, they have done away with that monstrous weight of Head-dresses; their hats are small, well-fitted, and vastly taking to the eye."

"Naught in the extravagances of the Fair Sex can displease you. I grant you the pretty creatures have bedizened themselves time out of mind as they please, but not to the detriment of every man's nostrils. 'Tis not agreeable to the dictates of Reason and good-breeding; 'tis outrageous, and a thing to be kept back by the Law. The men are different, and sober in their guise; no essenced fops and tawdry courtiers walk here."

"Ay, most of 'em are in sad Black, as if for a Funeral. The doves are censured, while the crows are spared. The Law—for the Fair Ones! There is none, as all wise men know."

Sir Roger frowned and fidgeted. Then he rose in stately fashion, and his companion followed him, with some reluctance. Indeed, I think I heard Will Honeycomb mutter, as he went, that some tempers were spoilt by the Heat.

Advertisement

A young gentlewoman, of about nineteen years of age (bred in the family of a person of quality lately deceased) who paints the finest flesh-colour, wants a place, and is to be heard of at the studio of Monsieur Grotesque, an admired painter in Chelsea.

N.B.—She is also well-skilled in the Mud-treatment, reduces awkward ankles, and chuses robes so as to suit the colours of the face with great art and success.

V. R.

NO COMPLAINTS

BY GERALD GOULD

OF course, I do not wish to complain. In other words, I do wish to complain. And I wish to complain about something which has, next to the weather, always provided strong silent Englishmen with their aptest occasions for complaint. I wish to complain about English hotel food.

Recently I made two typical and significant disbursements, of five shillings each—one in France and one in England. In France, I received in return bedroom accommodation (straitened, it is true, and far from luxurious, but adequate and clean): breakfast, of excellent coffee and bread-and-butter: lunch, of soup (superlative), salad, joint and vegetables: dinner, of fish (perfectly cooked), joint, vegetables and savoury. In England, for the same sum, and in a provincial inn of similar pretensions, I received one meal, an alleged dinner: soup, neither hot, cold nor plentiful: flabby cod, still floating in the water which had boiled it: tough and watery mutton, chilly and watery potatoes, greens far gone in the sere and yellow leaf: and a morsel of veined superannuated Cheddar cheese. The contrast must be admitted to be remarkable.

Now, I do not wish to exaggerate. In other words, I do wish to exaggerate—but, on this occasion, won't. I admit that I have had bad and expensive meals in France, cheap and admirable meals in England. I confess that there is no dish in all the breadth of the continent of Europe to rival a slice of English beef at its high point of succulence. I acknowledge that I have just been reading in the papers about the appointment of an English *chef* to an English restaurant. But the main point, I think, will scarcely be disputed: they do in France, rich and poor, by and large and on the whole, cozen more variety and delicacy of tastiness out of the raw materials of food than we have ever learnt to do here. Take merely soups, or sauces! What range, what daring, what assiduity in experiment and combination, what compulsion upon the poorest herb to yield its ultimate flavour, in French hotels! What a thick and pasty conformity, in English! What's sauce for the goose is supposed, among us, to be sauce for the chicken, the asparagus and the pig (I do not mean this literally: I seek rather, like the Impressionists, to give an impression: but you know what I mean.)

I speak disinterestedly in the matter. I am not one that greatly cares for choice and excellence of food, save in its more liquid and aerated forms. If you ask me to lunch, and turn me loose among the drinks, I will prove no censor of the eats: I suppose I must be what is called an ascetic. But fair's fair; and it certainly does seem odd that, in places of public entertainment, the edible matter of old England should be so monotonous and so expensive in comparison with that of France. "Barbecue your whole hogs," cried Lamb, "to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic . . ." Well, strong meats call for strong measures; but somehow I do not

think the pork one gets in eating-houses has been subjected to these incitements and adornments; it is apt to remain plain pork, grey matter resistant to teeth and stomach. Or take salads, those tests of a nation's spirit; Robert Louis Stevenson's charge upon a garden was:

Let first the onion flourish there,
Rose among roots, the maiden-fair,
Wine-scented and poetic soul
Of the capacious salad bowl

—yet how little attention do we pay, and how much do our neighbours, to the minglings and dressings!

Not only are we less careful of food than the French: we are even less careful than our own ancestors. We eat in immeasurably smaller quantities, to begin with; and we treat the matter less ardently. Descriptions of meals in novels, nowadays, are usually inserted merely to demonstrate the nice palate and worldly wisdom of hero and author: the location is more often Monte Carlo than Wigan. Contrast the huge and jolly indulgences of the Victorians!—think of the capons, lobsters, pigeon-pies, veal and ham patties, to say nothing of the wines, beers and punches, of a Pickwick-picnic! I can at the moment recall only one really heroic meal in contemporary fiction; and that is the dinner that killed old Heythorp, in Mr. Galsworthy's 'A Stoic.' Oysters ("not quite what they used to be at Pimm's in the best days, but not bad—not bad!") with champagne; soup, with sherry; fish; sweetbread, with more champagne; spinach in cream and three cutlets; "he could have managed a snipe—fresh shot! . . . there were but the *soufflé* and the savoury to come"; the bottle of champagne finished before the sweet's arrival; a glass of the 'sixty-eight port; then the decanter by the fire; down to the dregs of that; and so to brandy. But even Heythorp, no mean performer, yielded the palm where it was due: "Ah! The French were the fellows for eating, and—looking things in the face! Not hypocrites—not ashamed of their reason or their senses!"

Yet can we honestly argue that, when a people eats well, it does so because it loves the truth? Is a nation of cooks really of necessity superior to a nation of shop-keepers? Even though it is the fact that France offers us a greater range of flavours than England, and for fewer pence, does that really prove anything against ourselves? May it not mean that we are neglecting the flesh-pots through our well-known British preoccupation with the things of the spirit? In making this suggestion I am not wholly serious; but I submit that there must be some explanation other than the economic—since what economic explanation could conceivably be adequate?—for the admitted national difference. Is there perhaps a lurking Puritanism—a fear that the pleasures of the table were never meant for the likes of us—an unconscious self-denial—a confusion of voracity with vice—a shameful tendency towards Secret Eating?

Let drink throw light on food. At that five-shilling-a-day French hostelry I spoke of, there was available a pure and pleasant white wine, the ordinary wine of the country, unlabelled and unsung, but good enough stuff for all that—at three francs, or six pennies, the bottle! It is

not our fault that we cannot grow vines and make vintages in England; we must not expect any wine, good or bad, for sixpence; but I have a feeling that ten thousand vineyards, if we possessed them, and could nourish the golden grape with golden sun, would still not give us wine of that quality at that price. It is less a question of climate than of character; and there we must leave it; for national character is a thing beyond description or dissection. You cannot indict peoples, or reduce states to statements.

When solitary and hungry, I have sometimes played the game of "My Ideal Meal." (It belongs to the type of "What Three Books would you take to a Desert Island?") My imagination never goes rioting among the extravagant cates and cakes; the best is good enough, even in idea; still, I do *not* like to pay five shillings for tasteless and tepid morsels. If the English character is indeed built up on that proportion of edible to spendable, the English character, to justify the bargain, should be even nobler than they tell me it is.

But, of course, I do not wish to complain.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- ¹ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.
- ² Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.

THE JAW-BONE OF AN ASS

SIR,—The curious discovery recently made with regard to the famous picture of 'The Toper,' by Franz Hals, which is now in the Scottish National Gallery, is from many points of view of the greatest interest. It seems that the picture was a portrait of the artist's friend Verdonck, and that the jaw-bone of an ass (afterwards painted out) was introduced by way of a joke, suggested, of course, by the story of Samson in the XVth chapter of the Book of Judges.

Admirable reproductions of the picture, both in its original and altered state, were published in the *Sphere*, and the position in which the jaw-bone is held recalls the attitude of one of the figures in the group of 'Cain and Abel,' which stood in the quadrangle of "B.N.C.," and is now thought by competent critics to represent 'Samson slaying a Philistine.' It is a remarkable coincidence that a somewhat similar doubt attaches to a picture by Rembrandt, in the Museum at Berlin, which is usually described as 'Samson threatening his father-in-law,' but is thought by some people to represent a similar episode in the life of a German prince! Milton, in the 'Agonistes,' makes Samson speak of the jaw-bone as a "trivial weapon," but "in the hand of the giant" such a club might probably be used with deadly effect.

I am, etc.,

WALTER CRICK

Hartfield Square, Eastbourne

LOUD-SPEAKERS

SIR,—I would consider myself fortunate if I had to go to the extent of walking down the street in which I live or sitting in my garden after dinner in

order to hear a loud-speaker, as mentioned by Lycurgus in discussing the loud-speaker menace.

I have only to be in my dining-room or study, which are in the front of the house, or in my drawing-room or bedroom, which are at the back, to be subjected to these instruments of torture. On my return home about 7.15, I am greeted at the gate by the booming of my next-door neighbour's very loud-speaker, which continues throughout the evening, thereby rendering occupation of the dining-room and study extremely uncomfortable. If I go into the drawing-room after dinner, the loud-speaker of my neighbour at the end of the garden is encountered.

I never know when he is going to do so, but, sometimes, in the course of the evening, my next-door neighbour puts his loud-speaker on at the back of his house, then I can go into my study and get a quiet hour. Three or four years ago I used to get through a fair amount of reading after dinner, but now, what with flitting from one room to another and the generally disturbed atmosphere, there is no pleasure in being at home when my day's work is over; this also applies to the week-ends.

I am, etc.,

IVOR M. PHILLIPS

THE TOTALISATOR

SIR,—I have just seen Mr. Vaughan Covell's letter and I admit that he is right and that my own letter pitched it too strong. I stand corrected. I know that English commercial morality is higher than that of other countries,

I would only say that the objectionable stricture was intended to apply not in general but to some individual who might, to serve certain interests, be chosen for an executive position in connexion with the totalisator. All who know the system are aware that it may effect a great change in the conduct of racing; and, if treated as a commercial undertaking regardless of other considerations, it may cause great trouble.

There would have been no danger of this trouble had the responsibility been left with the Jockey Club. But the Government (after the House of Commons had just passed the second reading on a free vote) changed over this responsibility to a nondescript corporation, and, as the price of its support, stipulated that the use of the totalisator should be extended to flapping pony meetings. It intends, presumably, to call into being a number of such meetings near cities so that its ill-starred betting-tax may at least emerge with the six millions in its mouth which the Chancellor swore by the nine gods that he would have.

Incidentally, I believe that if this is agreed to, the opponents of the totalisator, when their day comes, will administer a corrective which will be a bitter pill to some.

I am, etc.,

C. A. KNAPP
(Captain)

Greece

'SCIENCE AND THE CITIZEN'

SIR,—Your leading article, entitled 'Science and the Citizen,' that appeared in last week's issue of your otherwise admirable journal, was most unfortunate. It is very important to make sure one has found the real culprit before one proceeds to denounce him to the police or to such authority as may be competent to proceed against him on behalf of the community as a whole. This time you have seized the

wrong man. Perhaps you are right in asserting that at the time you had him under close observation, he was acting in a most fatuous manner. Be that as it may, mere fatuity must not be taken for complete evidence of guilt—and I roundly maintain that Science is not to blame for the horrible state into which our civilization is slowly but surely slipping. I am a scientist myself—an economist and student of industrial administration. It is part of my studies to seek to map out the varied interplay of economic motives in modern industrialized communities, and to lay bare the vital centres of the directive power that actuates the whole economic fabric. If "the air is polluted by noise and smoke," if "the land is polluted by bad building, hideous advertisements, and the indiscriminate invasion of science's legates," if "the seas and rivers are polluted by industrial filth, and the road holds either a march of protracted boredom or a procession of imminent death"—the responsibility lies with the industrial or commercial magnate rather than with the scientist. The man who calls the tune is the man who pays the salaries of the crowds of scientific investigators of all kinds who wait upon his bidding. If by an enlightened or unenlightened calculation of profit and loss, the *entrepreneur* decides that pollution and death are preferable monetarily to cleanliness and health, then pollution it will be, though the chemist produce you a complete antidote for your poisons, though the artist detail a pleasing colour-scheme for your advertisements, or the sociologist demonstrate conclusively the appalling human waste and misery that result from current schemes of production and consumption.

No possible advance will be made in discussion of this topic until we get clear in our minds the details of the economic background to our present-day problems. No one is more desirous than I of seeing established the adequate controls that you suggested in your article; but nothing will be gained by misplaced flagellation of the wrong persons.

I am, etc.,

H. W. PALMER (B.Comm.)

5 Park Road North, Acton, W.3

[Our correspondent misses the point of our leader, which criticized the self-satisfaction of scientific orators on festival occasions. Naturally we do not condone the employer who misuses science. But our immediate object was to point out that the scientific organizations do little to fight such misuse and are content to go on "discovering" without bothering about the control of those discoveries. The scientist has his duties to the community as well as to his profession.—ED. S.R.]

COAST CUSTOMS

SIR,—I fancy your reviewer and myself are at issue over the word Protectorate as distinct from Colony. I note that in my first paragraph I spoke—mistakenly—of "British Colony," though later I stated that land in a British Protectorate could not be purchased, and this I still maintain, although if Akim Abuakwa is in the Gold Coast Colony my remarks do not apply to it. It is hardly necessary to point out the difference between the governance of a Colony and a Protectorate.

It would appear from these two books that, if Akim Abuakwa is a Colony, it is fighting a losing battle against the phenomena of civilization, and one is tempted to speculate with your reviewer whether it might not have been left under indirect Tribal Rule a little longer.

I am, etc.,

"OLD COASTER"

THE THEATRE

LOVELY LADIES

BY IVOR BROWN

Song of the Sea. By Arthur Wimperis and Lauri Wylie. Music by Eduard Kunneke. His Majesty's Theatre.

Excelsior. Adapted by H. M. Harwood from the French of MM. Armont and Gerbidon. The Playhouse.

IT is a long time now since I unpacked my heart with words about a musical comedy. I had dallied too often with that Muse and her escort of lovely ladies, and to bask continually in the artificial sunshine of their smiles is to risk being burned up by a boredom for which there is no salve this side of self-slaughter. However, seeing that Mr. Alec Rea was connected with the production of 'Song of the Sea,' I determined to try again. If I suggest that Mr. Rea played the part of head and front legs in the excellent but now extinct monster called Reandean, I might suggest discourtesy to Mr. Dean, which is remote from my intention. It is sufficient to say that old Reandean and new Reandco are both beneficent institutions. I am extremely grateful to Mr. Alec Rea; he goes on putting good work into the English Theatre without making a fuss about it. A trip to the St. Martin's Theatre is usually a solace to the despairing critic who feels himself being broken on the dreadful wheel of Shaftesbury Avenue. Mr. Rea is a mid-brow after my own heart, a mid-brow who likes mannerly things. His recent crook play at the St. Martin's, 'Knight Errant,' was foolery edged with finesse instead of barbarism banged across the footlights. Next, with the Daniel Mayer Company, Mr. Rea was to enter upon a career of song and dance. I felt sure that he would foot it fealty.

My hopes were justified. 'Song of the Sea' is an English version of a German musical piece about Nelson and his Neapolitan nights. In England Nelson is conceived as a regrettable rip or, by fearsome contrast, as a younger brother of Duty, "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God." When I was at school the chapel was, for memorial purposes, embellished (fearful word—but oh, how apt!), yes, embellished with a gigantic reredos compact of graven images of the great. A huge Parliament of Prowess was erected over the altar with one deputy for each craft and profession, as in Rotary Clubs. Poor Nelson was not allowed to stand for the navy. Evidently the designers of this incitement to young hero-worship had nodded their heads sadly over Naples and sent out hurriedly for the likeness of Sir John Franklin, to whom ice was more congenial. As in the chapel, so in musical comedy. Nelson is not to abide our question in any form. Too frail for a reredos, he is too sacrosanct for song and dance. So we have the saga figures replaced by Lieut. Richard Manners, and Nancy of the Pelicann Inn who goes to Naples with Sir William Candysshe.

I observe that one of my colleagues has observed gravely that the plot is somewhat silly. He might as well have protested that boiled cod served tepid in a pool of water (as on railway trains) is somewhat insipid. Who on earth cares what Sir William did, why Nancy was such a simpleton, or whether the bold Richard did or did not swim the Gulf of Naples in a sheepskin? All that matters is what they look like and the noise they make. The answer is that they look delightful and that Herr Kunneke's music decorates both Portsmouth and Naples with a stylish fluency. The hearts of oak are not compelled to pulsate to log-cabin melodies nor does England expect that every lady will do her Charleston.

There are genuine airs and genuine graces in this piece which, if not totally "period," does at least dip its flag to history. Mr. Wimperis, with his acidities of humour, and Mr. Baskcomb, with his

rendering of this tartness, must occasionally slip from one century to another and there is a grotesque dance inserted which not only accepts the modern mode of acrobatic ugliness but positively gloats over it. Otherwise there is a unity of effect to which the scenery of Messrs. Harris and Hammond and the costumes designed by Messrs. Norris and Gerald are important contributors. I am not persuaded that lovely ladies are to be seen at their best in the salvation-army bonnets and bunched-up lines of "First Empire" fashions, but it is all a very pleasant release from the blazer-and-bathing-dress parades of Nanette et Cie and the frogged jackets of Ruritanian throne-rooms. This is musical comedy on its best behaviour.

Miss Lilian Davies is there to sing the charming Kunneke melodies and Mr. Stanley Holloway to render songs of the sea. Miss Davies carries her admirable distaste for the usual simpering to the verge of glumness, but I have observed her before conferring real dignity on a Balkan princess who had to waltz her way through this "wale of tears" and in 'Song of the Sea' she has an easier task because there is already dignity of sound and scene on which to work. The production has been undertaken by Mr. Jack Hulbert, whose tuition of crowd and chorus is one of the marvels of current stagecraft. I understand that as a task-master he is terrific; it is obvious that his discipline is enormously successful in getting pace with precision and a supple and ingenious variety in the dances. The movements vary from ballet à la Russe to more conventional manœuvres of song and dance and they are well blended. A typical instance of the mood in which this piece has been staged is Mr. Claude Hulbert's "hoofing." This dancer is very much of our own time, and with the astonishing nimbleness of his witty limbs he can make any sort of antic aphorism. But he keeps to the period, picks up a horn-pipe, and executes thereon a fantasy of perfect clownship. Mr. Rea has gone into musical comedy without loss of reputation and will, I hope, emerge without loss of gold. The management has certainly equipped its vessel sumptuously and there will be much to recover before anything is gained. But what is so welcome is that in refusing the old ideal of loving beauty with economy it has given form and taste to its spectacular largesse and has not spilled its money in the customary pursuit of a merely wanton and barbaric display.

'Excelsior,' which began life as 'L'Ecole des Cocottes,' is a piece of cheerful cynicism which meanders through farce and ends with a sudden twist of finely spectacular tragedy. Ginette of Montmartre is a young lady who intends to get on. Her honour can hardly stand rooted in dishonour since that supposes some primary endowment of principle. Ginette has no more sense of morals than a sparrow; she moves up the ladder of "love" under guidance of a decayed aristocrat who begins as a seedy instructor of etiquette in search of a few francs and ends as a sleek pander arranging the progress of the lady's march to Parisian sovereignty. The part of Ginette must be extremely attractive to an actress who cares for hard work, as Miss Gladys Cooper undoubtedly does. This is none of your pieces in which the player composes a mask and a method in the first act and then changes nothing but apparel for the next two hours. First there is Ginette, a cheerful little baggage who sprawls and brawls like any urchin; then she becomes Geneviève, who is working at the way of the world with ferocious diligence and has just learned how to be genteel in her new elegance. There is a world of satire in the mass of Geneviève's new-found curls and the all too artful poise of a tutored finger. Lastly there is Geneva, the idol of Paris. All the animation of Ginette has vanished; there is now only a frozen beauty that is the coverlet of a fathomless fatigue. The visual quality of this last act is superb. Miss Cooper is majestically throned

in her curtained splendour with her latest and richest lover as her lackey. The world is at her feet; Ministers of State would have her to dine; the Press jostles for a trifle of her gossip; the dressmakers fight for the honour of enrobing her. But in such heart as she has left, there is only a desire to hear the chimes at midnight with the Doll Tearsheets of her youth. Almost she rebels, but the professor is at hand. In the college of cocottes something is expected of the head of the school; *noblesse oblige*. She abandons the idea of revisiting Montmartre and goes despairing to new victories. The play, which has so far lived by its sharp humours, turns to a great moment of piteous irony and Miss Gladys Cooper gives to that moment a permanency in the mind by the marble of her acting. The change from rough vivacity to this living statuary is a great piece of work and 'Excelsior' is not only to be heard for its wit but seen for the frigid loveliness of stage and player in the final scene.

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—133

SET BY GERALD BULLETT

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for part of a dialogue, in Mr. George Moore's manner, between any two piquantly contrasted literary men, living or dead. The fragment must not exceed 500 words and must embody, in this order, allusions to Ravel, Robert Elsmere, escalator, Mr. H. G. Wells, the SATURDAY REVIEW, *Veuve Clicquot*, and the British Museum Reading Room.

B. Let us suppose that Mr. Hilaire Belloc is moved to scribble a four-lined (English) epigram on the title-page of his copy of 'Candide.' We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best attempt to supply that epigram.

RULES

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 133a, or LITERARY 133a).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of these rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, September 24, 1928. The results will be announced in the issue of September 29.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 131

SET BY MARTIN ARMSTRONG

A. Transform into an English love-letter of the formal and somewhat stilted kind prevalent in the days of Jane Austen, and of a length not exceeding 300 words, the following poem of Burns. First Prize Two Guineas; Second Prize Half a Guinea.

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide the stour
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said among them a',
'Ye arena Mary Morison.'

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whas only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

B. Mrs. S. and Miss W. meet in the street and exchange platitudes about the weather. Both ladies have the habit of speaking alliteratively, each in the letter of the alphabet that her initial implies. Miss W. has difficulty in pronouncing her r's. We offer a first prize of One Guinea and a second prize of Half a Guinea for a lyric in not more than twelve lines embodying the conversation.

REPORT FROM MR. MARTIN ARMSTRONG

131A. At least nine of the entries for this conversation or perversion of Robert Burns are as charming love-letters as any young lady can have hoped, a century and a quarter ago, to receive. There can be no doubt that the letter signed "Wm. Richmond" deserves first prize, but it has been difficult, among so many that are good, to award the second. N. M. D. sends a delightful letter, but has not, I feel, kept quite strictly enough to the matter of the original, and this applies equally to W. G. S. K. E. J. B. has some excellent passages: "Pray be not alarmed, dear madam, on receiving this letter, by the apprehension of its containing any distressing matter. I write only to state that I propose myself the satisfaction of waiting on you beneath your window at dusk this evening." Very good, too, is W. G. S. K.'s reference to "these few poor lines . . . to remind you of the promise with which you indulged my prayers in the Shrubbery this afternoon." "Whas only faut is loving thee" is well translated by Meliboeus: "Ah me, if that be guilt, I am a sinner indeed!" and G. H. F. has found the right key in his description of the dance: "... although of the company assembled round me, there were ladies not lacking in beauty or deportment—and indeed one who is the favourite of the officers was there—I could not chuse to stand up with them, but sighed that they were not Miss Morison." George van Raalte's version, though it never quite equals some of the brightest moments of those I have quoted from, maintains a higher level as a whole and I recommend it for the second place.

FIRST PRIZE

Madam,

If I presume to hope that the approaching Hour will find you again at the window of your Apartment, it is because you have promised me no less, and I desire no more. One Glance from you, and I shall account myself a Happy man; one smile, and I shall no longer covet the most elegant of Fortunes. In those feeling words of the Poet,

Were I laid on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning Day was closed
I could mock the sultry toil—

but I must follow the audacious Gay no further.

Last night, dear Lady, amid the Lights and Music, the Brilliance and Fashion of the Pump Room, I sate Alone—my thoughts flying so irresistibly to You as to render me Insensible to Sights and Sounds alike. True, I could not chuse but observe that Miss T. has a very pretty genteel Air, and Miss K. a not unagreeable Figure; that it is not perhaps without Reason that

the *beau monde* of Bath has made of Miss R. its constant Toast; but if I permitted myself these Reflexions, I protest, Madam, it was but to complete and silence them with the words, "but *she* is not Miss Morison."

Charming Miss Morison, will you destroy the peace of one who for your sake would scarce hesitate to sacrifice his Existence? If to adore you be a crime, is nothing less than a Broken Heart to be the penalty? If I cannot hope to deserve your Favours, must I be deprived of your Compassion also? The sentiments of Miss Morison may not be Passionate; I cannot believe them to be Inhumane.

Your afflicted devoted servant,

WM. RICHMOND

SECOND PRIZE

Dear Miss Morison,

This being the hour of our appointment, and of my own very eager anticipations, I beg you to deny me no longer the pleasure of beholding at your window those amiable and engaging looks of which, I vow, I am more avid than a miser of his treasures. Indeed, for the possession of such an agreeable young female I should be happy to support hardships of the most laborious kind and in the most arduous conditions.

It was, believe me, to you that my imagination fled last evening, when I found myself sitting at a dance, insensible alike to the notes of the instruments, the splendours of the ball-room, and the various charms of the young ladies present, among whom were some universally acclaimed over their glasses by the gentlemen of the town: nevertheless I was constrained to observe to myself in a melancholy undertone, on remarking each eligible young lady, that no perfection could compensate for her not being my dear Miss Morison.

If, however, it be a fault to have conceived for you so ardent and tender a regard, I cannot but think it an excessive punishment if you should inflict on me the pang of disappointment; nor can I believe that you would desire to bring unhappiness to one who would willingly lay down his life in your cause. Should you, therefore, find it impossible to requite my feelings with an equal tenderness, I can with some confidence implore you at least to accord me your compassion, as I am convinced there is no room for unkindness in the breast of a young woman of your refined and gentle disposition.

Your devoted and sincere admirer,

GEORGE VAN RAALTE

131B. This competition has produced painful results. In their zeal to be alliterative many of the competitors have not troubled to be literary. Alliteration has flown to their heads and I find myself involved in an orgy of verbal drunkenness very distressing to witness. Alliteration, so far from being an artful aid, has been pursued as an end in itself, and rhythm, poetry, humour, and even coherence have been left far behind. Only some half-dozen have kept their heads in the general debauch; among them, Meliboeus, H. C. M., Issachar, and Lester Ralph. None is first-rate, but I recommend the first two for first and second prize respectively.

FIRST PRIZE

"Good-day," said S., "from last year, what a change!

Such sunny spells seem surely something strange!

Since Saturday, when Sister crossed the sea

To spend six solid weeks with Uncle G.,

It hasn't shed a spot!—Seems safe to say,

No summer spurned so well St. Swithin's Day!"

"Ah, yes," said W., drily, "Vewwy twue!

We will not wearwy all the warm weeks thwough.

But when the winter's wind will wage and wear,

When England's weather waxes wet once more,

And when our walks abwoad wend home again

—I won't wepine to watch that welcome wain!"

MELIBOEUS

SECOND PRIZE

Miss W. What wet and woeful weather we are getting;

Who ever wants this wretched drenching wain?

Mrs. S. Such sudden showers are certainly upsetting;

The Simpsons say there's splendid sun in Spain.

Miss W. My waterpooof is weally worn to tatters;

The water went wight through the woof last night.

Mrs. S. My spatterdashes are a mass of spatters;

And Susan's scarlet skirt is such a sight.

Miss W. One wonders whether wireless is to blame?

Mrs. S. My sister Sue was saying just the same.

H. C. M.

BACK NUMBERS—XC

TO survive in a notorious libel: that has been the fate of Robert Buchanan. All his creative work has fallen into neglect, most of it into utter oblivion, but he seems secure of an unenviable eternity as the author of a single pseudonymous libel. Yet for close on thirty years he was somebody. He had his popular successes, and he had successes with at least a section of the elect, and almost to the last when he assailed his betters they or their accredited supporters thought him worth answering. More could be claimed for him. Of the organs of educated critical opinion which appeared throughout his career, there is hardly one which did not at some moment of pious aberration salute him as the spokesman of sanity or decency. He became lonelier as time went on, because it became evident that in important specific cases he had been profoundly mistaken as a critic and because it became equally evident that the promise, such as it was, of his youth would never be fulfilled; but at many stages he was plainly the representative of the majority or of a large, solid minority. His work is thus a document which cannot be ignored by the historian of critical taste in Victorian England.

* * *

As a poet he had ambitions rather than ambition; and when it was made clear that in no one direction had he done enough to satisfy the better judges, he consoled himself with the reflection that he "might have been sitting empty-stomached on Parnassus" if he had condescended to be a specialist. With his opportunism, his desire for immediate effect, he could not understand that the men he attacked were specialists not because they were narrowly limited or because they felt that they had found a paying line of poetical goods, but because they were strictly truthful each to his particular sense of the world. Buchanan wanted to write verse that would rival that of every contemporary, from Tennyson to G. R. Sims; he wanted to be in the anthologies and, even more, in the reciters; and up to a point he managed to get his way. The 'Ballad of Judas Iscariot,' which entered some anthologies, is not to be damned because it is a *pastiche*. Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol' owes as much to Hood's 'Eugene Aram,' and to some lines in Coleridge, and to Mr. A. E. Housman, whose book was sent him just before he began it, as Buchanan's piece owes to its obvious sources. But Wilde, not in the full sense a poet, made nearly all the borrowings tell tremendously, reminding us, with terrific dramatic effect, that the trapped creature was the amateur of beautiful things. In Buchanan's piece, which is merely a piece of writing, not something lived agonizingly, the borrowings are just borrowings. There are effective lines in the piece, as in some of his recitation pieces, but there is no genuine creative impulse.

* * *

And even as one of those who would do every-one else's work Buchanan comes very badly out of a comparison with a contemporary. Catulle Mendès really could do whatever every French poet of his age did. To read him is like reading an anthology of French poetry, from Victor Hugo to Verlaine, in which an editor has just missed the very best examples of each poet. There is more than mere imitation; the Hugo, for instance, being as good

as much in the master, and leaving the reader with the feeling that only by accident has he come on nothing that matches the song of the lover maddened by the winds from Spain, or the 'Chasseur Noir,' or the serenade of all serenades. To compare Buchanan's slabby novels with the accomplished falsity of the stories of Mendès would be absurd. And then, for most damaging contrast, against the never more than shrewd, often vulgarly perverse, sometimes disgusting criticism of Buchanan there is that body of critical work by Mendès in which the fine intelligence is not more remarkable than the catholic and cordial generosity. The slanderer of great men is not to be brought into any comparison with the man eager to recognize every sort of merit and adept in gracious compliment.

* * *

Catulle Mendès, let us hope, answered to something permanent in the French literary character; Buchanan, I fear, answered to something permanent in ours. In part, no doubt, Buchanan stood alone. That notorious pseudonymous article on "the fleshly school of poetry" was to some extent inspired by malice, as Buchanan, in a letter to Browning which I have read but cannot precisely remember, more or less admitted. In other and unpublished correspondence which I have been privileged to read for quite different purposes there is proof that years before the fleshly school article Buchanan had been incensed by the very wise action of Moxon (as represented by Payne) in taking away the editing of Keats from him in favour at first of a great poet, who did not carry it out, and then of W. M. Rossetti, who did. From about 1865 he was looking for opportunities for reprisal. But mere vindictiveness apart, Buchanan stood for that provincial and insolent attitude towards original work which, with moral or patriotic excuses, unpleasantly distinguished average English criticism during more than three-fourths of the nineteenth century.

* * *

We know that a man in many ways so excellent as Southey could develop a preposterous rancour towards writers who did not come to him with, so to speak, references from accepted moralists. It shocks us to find him boasting that he has affixed Byron to a gibbet whence no one will be able to take down the body of the miscreant: it hurts us much more to find him indulging in unintentionally blasphemous lamentations over Shelley, so immeasurably his superior not only in genius but in generosity, moral courage, delicacy of feeling. Buchanan, alas! is in the tradition.

* * *

His last attack was on Mr. Rudyard Kipling; and it appeared, if I remember rightly, in the periodical which published his assault on Rossetti. The old venom and (it is fair to acknowledge) the old vigour of phrase were there. But Mr. Kipling was by then established. Buchanan had forgotten two things: he had forgotten that the best moment to hit a man is before he is quite up and that, as any actuary could have told him, he could not expect an opportunity of apologizing to Mr. Kipling as he had, in a vague and slimy dedication, to Rossetti. At the end of life he complained that, loving mankind, he had made all men his enemies. But when a writer libels every great contemporary what ground has he for complaint?

STET.

REVIEWS

INTERVIEWING GOETHE

BY EDWARD SHANKS

Goethe: the Story of a Man. By Emil Ludwig. Putnam. 2 vols. 42s.

WHEN this, Herr Ludwig's first biographical study, was published in Germany, the cultured affected to regard both its success and its merits with surprise—almost with amused surprise. The author was not a scholar, not even a critic by profession. He was a journalist. How could a journalist be expected to have anything new to say on a subject on which so much has been said that now even scholars and critics recoil from it in despair?

The answer to this question is that Herr Ludwig has neither new facts nor a new interpretation, but only a new method and that the method of the descriptive journalist. As he might have visited the Yellowstone Park or Kashmir or Soviet Russia with the object of "writing up" his impressions, so he has visited Goethe. The result is lively, highly coloured, quite readable and, on the whole, rather trivial. It has the effect of a protracted interview conducted and written by a skilled hand. The interviewer cannot really in an hour's, a day's, or even a week's conversation discover any "secret" of his subject of which the world at large is not already aware. His business is to tell the public what it knows, but in such manner as to make the knowledge seem fresh and striking. This is easier when the subject is dead, when intimate facts may be plainly mentioned and inferences drawn from them that cannot be contradicted. Personal contact does indeed stimulate the imagination of the interviewer, who can make good use of very little things which he has seen with his own eyes. Herr Ludwig has to make up for the lack of this by a plentiful use of illustrative invention. Here he excels, and this it is which has given his study of Goethe its great reputation.

There are pages in his book which almost make one believe that he has seen Goethe in the flesh—not, of course, as a friend, but as a journalist come for a special purpose and received in a very friendly way. His descriptions of the great man at home have just this note of forced, factitious intimacy:

All this time Goethe is eating very largely of an abundant, savoury menu. He carves a substantial fowl with his own hand, and empties a bottle of red wine which stands at his place (as at everybody's), but does not except by example urge anyone to drink. Then he confides to Ottilie that some artichokes have arrived, and everybody who behaves nicely shall have one. The basket is brought in. It came from Marianne in Frankfurt this morning—and as Goethe begins to separate the leaves of the prickly fruit, he falls silent for a while, absorbed in the construction of the plant. "Now he'll say something about his 'Metamorphosis,'" thinks the stranger, but Goethe lays the artichoke aside without a word.

It is very vivid, very deftly done, and this is representative of the whole book.

In the long run, however, the arts required for such a portrait of a celebrity become very tiresome. There seem to me to be two points, and two only, in which Herr Ludwig has something valuable, besides high colouring, to add to the generally accepted story. He presents a more sympathetic and lifelike picture of Goethe's relations with Christiane Vulpius, whom he eventually married, than any other biographer. He also goes further than any other biographer in making the unhappy August von Goethe a comprehensible, almost a likeable, certainly a pitiable, character. He deserves our gratitude for quoting here an outburst of that luckless son of a great man, which I do not remember to have seen before: "Not one of you knows anything about me! You all take me for a good-for-nothing brainless fellow—but inside

me here . . . the abysses! If you were to throw a stone into me, you'd have to listen a long time before you heard it fall!"

Otherwise he adds virtually nothing. We have the usual succession of events, the Leipzig years, the Strassburg years, Käthchen Schönkopf, Friederike, Lotte Buff, Lili, Weimar, the Duke, Frau von Stein, the journey to Italy, the driving daemon of which Goethe so often wrote, and all the other conventional ingredients. The difference is that they are presented under lights as blinding as those used in cinematography and the persons have to be made up to stand the effect of the lights. The weakness of Herr Ludwig's method is that he reaches his highest note too early and has to sustain it too long. There is no contrast of emphasis, only one heavy emphasis after another like successive strokes of a sledge-hammer. Not unnaturally the necessity of keeping at this level often leads Herr Ludwig astray. It sometimes seems as though it does not matter what he says so long as he says it trenchantly enough, and he utters contradictory judgments with an equal air of boldness. He says of Goethe and Friederike:

There we have Goethe at Sesenheim. We can read between the lines—the girl's condition and the mute looks of a family, which plead when they would do well to be angry; the boredom, impatience, and remorse of the young man who is longing to get away from the sweet maiden: it is Faust and Mephistopheles. What could he do? He fled the place.

Of Goethe and Lotte Buff:

He wanted a wife like any other young man. As always, he was thinking less of passion and romance than of home and marriage.

Of Goethe and Maximiliane Laroche:

Is not this little lady the third from whom Goethe had to tear himself in the full tide of passion? And was it not always for the woman's sake—for her peace of mind or security—that he left her? That was Goethe's appointed rôle with the women of his adolescence—unlimited surrender, and in the midst of his surrender, flight, to protect the woman.

These three passages simply do not make sense together, and it would be difficult to believe that Herr Ludwig cares whether they do or not. The first plainly states, what is undoubtedly the truth, that the young man, tiring of his naïve rustic mistress, deserted her rather than marry her. Goethe himself confessed, and castigated, his own treachery in 'Götz von Berlichingen,' in 'Clavigo,' and in 'Faust.' With neither of the other two women did he arrive at the point where the same alternative presented itself. Lotte, however much tempted she may have been, adhered to Kestner. Maximiliane's husband turned Goethe out of the house. There is not the smallest reason to suppose that in any one of these affairs "he was thinking less of passion and romance than of home and marriage." The real trouble was that his thoughts moved in precisely the contrary direction. As for Herr Ludwig's professed belief that he fled from Friederike to protect her, we may dismiss it, as she and her family (and Goethe) would have done, as nonsense of a high order. The best that can be said of Goethe in this affair is that he was not a calculating seducer (though he did say in a letter of a little earlier, "Ich verstehe mich wohl ein Mädchen zu verf—"), but rather a fiery sentimentalist who became involved without thinking of the consequences to himself or to others.

It may be urged in Herr Ludwig's favour that at least he has done well in taking Goethe for a moment out of the hands of the German professor. But this was done long ago by Lewes, whose biography has never received the praise it deserves. We have at our disposal knowledge not available to Lewes, but none that at all affects his general view of Goethe's character. There is no pedantry in his narrative, but much humanity and common sense and a style that does not leave in the ears an echo like that left by Herr Ludwig's endless clatter and rattle.

A LIBERAL THEORIST

Dialogues and Monologues. By Humbert Wolfe. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

MR. WOLFE commands the graces whether he writes prose or poetry; he has the Grecian ease and can be merry over his metaphysics. The Germans lumbered where the Greeks had run and Mr. Wolfe can be as nimble as any in the snaring not of beauty only but of beauty's logic. None the less one may regret his fondness for the Greek dialectical method. The dialogue distracts where the monologue might invite. Plato became ever more readable as his dialogue turned to monologue; so with Mr. Wolfe, whose penetration of mind and poise of style are things so individual that when he attempts to dramatize the opposition to his own ideas he does not fully succeed. In these conversations Wolfe echoes unto Wolfe.

Had he written a descriptive essay on a night in Ebury Street with George Moore (as he has done about some boyhood nights of his) he would surely have been more lucid (and no less sage) than he has proved to be in his somewhat tangled report of an evening's talk. He wished, very properly, to point out that Mr. Moore has been a prodigious worker and that the notion of a playful amateur of letters is utterly false. We agree and we admire the efficiency of the advocate. But the attempt to record a chat instead of to sum it up in tranquil memory only clouds the brilliance with wisps of confusion. If we want, for instance, to know whether it was Mr. Moore or Mr. Wolfe who said that "Pater's writing wasn't living prose but prose lying-in-state," we have to puzzle over the passage and refer diligently backwards to discover which gentleman is addressing the house.

There is a long dialogue with a Mr. Bypass on 'Modernism in Verse.' Mr. Bypass, although Mr. Wolfe enriches the fellow with much of his own felicity of phrase, remains fundamentally an ass and not worth refuting. In order to justify rebellion for rebellion's sake, the idiot Bypass has to announce such rubbish as "Art does not turn back upon itself; like Life itself it is for ever moving on." It is true that Mr. Wolfe's handling of Bypass leaves the fool cold and stark upon the ground; but anybody could knock Bypass into the King's Road. When a defender of modernist verse has to apologize for its typographical antics on the ground that this trickery can revitalize words, there is no need for any such dignified rebuke as Mr. Wolfe composes. If it be held that "roSe" is more significant than "rose" (or should it not be "gIn" and "gin"?) then the people to whom such trifles signify immensities have put themselves far beyond reach of reason.

Mr. Wolfe patiently reasons. In this book he frequently attempts to find the logic of loveliness, particularly in the medium of words and of poetry, and he brings to his search a wit that is rooted in common sense. He is a liberal theorist of the arts, neither mocking tradition nor playing the spaniel at its heels. He believes in formal values but he will treat the opposition with all courtesy, even though it be only rattling a petrol-can and calling the result poetry. He is unnecessarily deferential to Mr. T. S. Eliot and long-suffering with the saxophonic dithyrambists of America—who really believe that if they only smash sense and syntax to atoms they will smash beauty too and so rid the world of a detestable bourgeois oppression. Naturally, when Mr. Wolfe has finished with them, his gentleness of reprimand has made them look very silly indeed. But were they not silly enough before?

It should be added that the book is not all dialectic of this order, for it contains, along with much agreeable æsthetic musing, a first-rate essay on the Public

Servant in Fiction and memories of Bradford and Oxford. Mr. Wolfe, of Wadham, it seems, once joined the Canning Club and drank to Church and State in good Tory punch; he has served the latter, and he may still have a Disraelian interest in episcopal affairs. But in the politics of poetry he leads the Whigs who encourage new things in reason and enjoy old things in comfort; in Parnassus his club will certainly be called Reform.

FRANCE SINCE 1870

The Third Republic. By Raymond Recouly. Translated from the French by E. F. Buckley. Heinemann. 12s. 6d.

THE connexion between history and contemporary politics is emphasized by the fashion, which seems to be growing among historians, of making haste to deal with the last chapter before the others are completed. M. Halévy has announced an intention of publishing the final volume of his masterly history of England in advance of the intermediate volumes; the series of British documents relating to the outbreak of the war began with volume eleven, and now there appears the ninth volume of the 'National History of France,' which is edited by M. Funck-Brentano, while volumes seven and eight have still to come. If this is in some respects a welcome change from the former tendency of historians to neglect contemporary history, the student will find the reasons for the change a subject worthy of attention.

The series to which the present volume belongs is fairly favourably known to historians, and M. Madelin's volume on the French Revolution is often, though perhaps a trifle incautiously, regarded as the best introduction to the subject. M. Recouly appears, therefore, in distinguished company and the standard of criticism invited is correspondingly high. Dealing as he does with the latest generation, his task has been from some points of view harder than that of preceding writers, for, as one writer has observed, the living do not give up their secrets so readily as the dead. On the other hand M. Recouly has certain obvious advantages in his task. He appears to have read and travelled widely and to have acquaintance with some of the men who have been conspicuous in the later part of the period. His interestingly written book naturally gains in actuality from the last circumstance and reminds one of the old saying that the history of the present can be learned not from books but from men. But before speaking of M. Recouly's work, something should be said of the translation.

The lot of the translator is an unhappy one. The better his work the less he appears and the more likely is it that it will fail to provoke remark. In the present instance the translation is rather less good than it might be. From time to time the fairly good general level is broken and we are jolted by a rather clear reminder that it is, after all, a translation we are reading. Prepositions seem predestined pitfalls and French syntax sometimes exerts an insidious influence. Reading the sentence, in an account of Renan, "From time to time he took a rest from this erudite occupation, of which the charm of his genius did not always succeed in softening the austerity," one was reminded of those friends who return from the Continent eager to relate idiomatically their discoveries, telling one that it is forbidden to circulate with velocipedes on the pavement, and that it is the good wine of the country which renders to one the forces.

As already observed, this book is interestingly written. It is not a profound and even within its limits not a wholly satisfactory work. Its framework and standpoint are to a considerable extent conven-

tional and it hardly aims at impartiality. Impartiality, indeed, we are told in these days would be a bad thing were it not fortunately impossible. Failing impartiality, however, one may look for sincerity in the writing of history, which has been defined as making out a stronger case for the view one rejects than those who hold it can make out for themselves. And this may perhaps appear a harder saying still. Judged by this standard M. Recouly does not fare much worse than most people. On the other hand he frequently enlivens his narrative with an unfamiliar or unconventional point or story and his contact with some contemporary politicians lends an interest to much that he has to say.

M. Recouly's standpoint is compendiously indicated by his favourable judgment on the Third Republic, because its history to date began with a defeat and ended with a victory. On extra-European questions the book is commendably full, if not always as enlightening as we should like. Colonial expansion clearly has a special interest for the writer and it receives fairly full treatment. An instance of M. Recouly's skill in infusing his narrative with interest is to be found in the following passage:

The plantations of huge olive groves covering thousands of acres to the south of Soussa and Kairouan was due to the really miraculous wisdom of Paul Bourde, general secretary to the Government. As Le Verrier discovered a planet by means of mathematics, so Bourde, from a careful reading of Latin authors and from the ruins of presses, deduced the existence in Roman times of huge olive groves in regions which for two hundred years had been uncultivated desert land.

And a sense of history is conveyed by this brief description of the migration of the tribes near Biskra:

Year after year, and even century after century, this movement takes place with absolute regularity and certainty. Time has glided by without making any difference to the migrations of these pastoral peoples. These are the same now as they were when Virgil described them in the Third Book of the *Georgics*.

Many other points of interest might be raised. The author dwells, for example, on the total absence of precautions on the occasion of the Archduke's ill-fated visit to Serajevo. His treatment of the causes of the war is rather worse than perfunctory. He seems inaccurate in writing that the British delegation at Versailles, in 1919, demanded the destruction of the German fleet. And the treatment of changes of manners in the period is too slight to be of value.

The latest addition to the 'National History of France' is an interesting book not without utility, but, as the lecturers say, to be used with caution.

HEREDITARY CRIMINALS

The Land Pirates of India: An Account of the Kuravers. By W. J. Hatch. Seeley, Service. 21s.

SCATTERED over South India are the members of a tribe, mainly nomadic, commonly known as Korava, which is in the present volume spelt "Kuraver" in spite of the authoritative pronouncement of the Linguistic Survey which gives Korava as the proper form. With even less excuse the Veddahs of Ceylon are termed Vedans, and a writer on anthropology named Taylor is cited for the statement that they speak an Aryan language, something akin to our own English. The author's name is Tylor and the actual wording of his book is less misleading. These and other lapses notwithstanding, Mr. Wyatt has written a thoroughly interesting work which will be eagerly read by all who are attracted by stories of other lands.

The author does not tell us what his qualifications are for the task he has undertaken; his preface is dated "India, 1928"; but much of his information has

been personally collected, probably as a government official, for he has a humorous tale about a party of Korava who appealed to him to restrain a police constable from following them. Enquiry showed that the party had only a single adult male with them and he was decrepit and nearly blind; all the rest were in gaol for theft. We do not learn whether the inconvenient constable continued his attentions, but it may be surmised that he did.

We learn in the opening pages that the Korava is an hereditary, habitual and incorrigible criminal; it is therefore surprising to read on a later page that in olden days one section of the tribe was engaged in carrying merchandise up country and bringing back to the coast village products such as rice, pepper and chilies. Modern conditions, Mr. Wyatt says, have compelled this large section of the tribe to leave the carrying trade and, for the most part, to take to agriculture. It is not easy to reconcile this and other passages with the assertion that the Korava work only when they are unable to steal. There is also a lack of clarity in the discussion of Korava origins; it is asserted that the Korava are mentioned in the Mahabharata, but a few lines below it is implied that the people mentioned are the Kuru, who may or may not be identical with the Kurru who are regarded by the Linguistic Survey as identical with the Korava.

With all its merits, and they are considerable, Mr. Wyatt's work is disappointing to the scientific student mainly because of its omissions; there are some figures as to numbers, but they differ widely from the data of the Linguistic Survey; there is a list of divisions and subdivisions of the Korava, who are called indifferently a tribe or a caste without any attempt at definition of either term, though it can hardly be assumed that the general reader will be so much at home with these terms as to divine what is meant. We learn nothing as to the sex ratio,

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GOLLANCZ

rules of exogamy (if they exist), ritual prohibitions, and so forth; it is not even clear whether they all speak the same language, for Mr. Wyatt refers to the Yerukulas (called Yerukala in the Linguistic Survey) as a Telugu-speaking branch, though Sir George Grierson definitely states that they are Tamil-speaking and is disposed to regard Yerukala and Korava as identical. Mr. Wyatt may be right—it is a matter for experts in Indian languages—but it would be more convincing if he referred to the Survey and gave his reasons for differing from it.

It will perhaps be well for Mr. Wyatt if no Korava woman learns what he thinks of her; he grants that she is attractive, but adds that slyness is highly developed in her character; she can look as if butter would not melt in her mouth and has an insidious smile; and she poses in a way that disarms suspicion. In Europe these traits would perhaps not be found allied to a lovable character; but for all his hard words Mr. Wyatt finds much that is good in the Korava woman; she is an excellent mother, a loyal wife and the mainstay of the family which has temporarily lost its male supporter for reasons beyond his control. Old-age pensions for women are, it appears, not needed among the Korava, for Mr. Wyatt assures us that no woman is too old to be of service, for she can always guard the goods of the tribe and mislead the police by putting them off the scent when the men-folk are away.

The Korava may not perhaps be altogether desirable acquisitions to the district where they pitch their camp, but they are by no means degenerates, and outside the scheme of civilization; given a fair field and education on modern lines they will, Mr. Wyatt holds, certainly make good though there are people who assert that an educated Korava will be more daring, more crafty and more successful in his career of crime.

A REALIST BY THE BLUE LAGOON

Under the South. By James Norman Hall. Chapman and Hall. 15s.

THE South Sea Islands have been written up more often and less truthfully than almost any part of the globe. Their legend is so thick that we find it all but impossible to see them through it, and almost every writer who touches them has joined the romantic conspiracy and helped to make it thicker. In these unpretentious sketches, so light that they only just hang together, Mr. Hall succeeds in producing a really convincing picture. He has refused to be browbeaten into seeing things as everyone else has seen them before him. He has not tried to be profound, but he is more than merely entertaining; if this is not the truth about the South Sea Islands it is as near the truth as we are likely to get.

Having drifted to Tahiti soon after the Armistice, in pursuit of solitude, he came with no axe to grind and has been content to record what he has found. On the question of the trader *versus* the missionary as a "civilizing" influence, he gains conspicuously by his method of bringing in typical figures and letting them give their views; the outcome is not very favourable to either. He meets, on an island where a large and flourishing native population has dwindled to eighteen survivors, an American professor who has visited it off and on for twenty years, studying zoology. The professor says:

I doubt whether there has ever been elsewhere a primitive people so utterly and quickly destroyed by Western civilization as the inhabitants of this little archipelago. Various causes contributed to their disappearance, but there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the missionaries must bear by far the larger part of the responsibility. . . . The natives would have nothing to do with them, and small wonder, for

they were a proud intelligent race for all their primitive culture, and they were not long in discovering the truth—that they were superior to the men who had come to them as teachers and preceptors. . . . But the missionaries had the horrible persistence of their kind. They came again and again, and when peaceable methods failed they resorted to force; they were landed under cover of the guns of warships. The natives accepted them because there was no alternative.

The missionaries set to work at once to destroy the tabo—a system of laws, half secular, half religious, which constituted the only restraints the natives knew. . . . The chiefs and priests lost their authority, and there was nothing to replace it. The people were at loose ends and, exploited by men of superior cunning, they lost heart. By 1850 they were rapidly decreasing in numbers. Trade had followed the Word, of course, and disease followed trade. One doesn't blame the missionaries directly for this, of course, but by destroying as they did the very fabric of the old native life, they prepared the field for the secular exploiters. The white colony was growing all this while. In the 'sixties there were three hundred or more planters and traders making small fortunes in cotton during the American Civil War. The chief difficulty was in persuading the natives to work on the plantations. There was nothing they wanted. Mirrors, cheap jewellery, gaudy calicoes, were worthless here. At last the traders thought of opium, and after that there was no more trouble. The natives would do anything to get it, even work. . . . After the Civil War, when American cotton was again on the market, the place began to run down, and by the late 'seventies nearly every one had gone. Old La Motte, the Government agent, is the only one left of all that crowd. . . .

And now "Taputea" lies there like a sucked orange. That, of course, is a tabloid history of an extreme case; Mr. Hall was not so disappointed with Polynesia as he had prepared himself to be, and he spent some time marooned on an atoll where the inhabitants, although nominally Roman Catholics or Latter Day Saints, had lost and gained remarkably little. His description of an attempt to live the simple life in a one-roomed house with a plot of ground in the hinterland of Tahiti is, perhaps, the most amusing chapter in the book, and it is a lesson in economics that he was compelled even there to revert to journalism in order to maintain himself. All told, he has seen a good deal of the Pacific from different aspects, and he is artist enough to be able to interpret his experience with perfect economy and effectiveness. The publishers are to be congratulated on the printing and production of the book, which are particularly well done, but the proofs might have been better read and, considering that there are no illustrations, it is difficult to account for the price.

SUPERSTITION v. KNOWLEDGE

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BACK TO BYZANTIUM

The Station. By Robert Byron. Duckworth. 18s.

MR. BYRON'S book must on no account be mistaken for a book of travel. Such an error would be excusable enough at the first glance. But a very little investigation will disclose the magnitude of the error.

Mr. Byron is not to be judged by his travel notes. He is, in fact, a prophet, an apostle with a new gospel, a voice crying in a wilderness—a wilderness of broken columns and crumbling "compositite" capitals, of armless and headless statues of "classical" design, from which all the gay colour has been washed these two thousand years, but before which modern civilization still stands gaping reverently, bowler hat in hand. "Back to Byzantium!" cries Mr. Byron—"here is both the origin and the goal of modern art." Undoubtedly he has reason. We are, at the moment, nearer to Justinian than to Raphael (where we may be to-morrow no one knows!) and it is, to say the least, illogical that professed admirers of modern art should spend so much time among the picture galleries of Venice and Florence without ever taking the trouble to pay a visit to Mount Athos, or even, in most cases, to Ravenna. It is not as if Mount Athos were inaccessible; it is within easy reach of Salonica or Constantinople and Mr. Byron tells us exactly how to get there. It is just that no one is interested in Byzantine art, no one cares that in the hard times that have followed the war the buildings on the holy mountain are falling into disrepair, the frescoes and mosaics peeling from their walls. Standing before the little chapel of St. George in the monastery called

St. Paul's, Mr. Byron sums the matter up in this fine outburst:

Let him who still conceives of Byzantine painting as a hieratic degradation, imagine a Giotto unsweetened, as Giotto already was, by Italianate naturalism, painting in the luminous colours of El Greco—those cold blues and clarets, olive-shadowed yellows, and pure, clear greens of under the sea; lit with angry brilliance; geometric in form; yet in austerity sympathetic, in power gentle. It is these, the very flower of the Byzantine Renaissance—not only the link between European art and the East, final explication of El Greco, but in themselves divorced from history, masterpieces for the world—that are threatened. Americans are expending £1,000,000 to convert the most picturesque quarter of old Athens into a pillared playground for cats, that they may unearth yet another shoal of those inert stone bodies which already debar persons of artistic sensibility from entering half the museums of Europe. And here, for the want of a few hundreds, paintings which historically throw an entirely novel light on the origins of European painting since the Renaissance, and aesthetically exhibit an astonishing and moving affinity with the goals of modern art, must perish.

It is certainly very annoying. But Americans might reply that they cannot do everything, and that if by their more spectacular efforts they are throwing into bold relief the cases where nothing is being done, they should be praised for that, not blamed.

Mount Athos is not the only instance of this inexplicable neglect and indifference, existing side by side with an almost feverish curiosity. In Alexandria, for instance, the "classicals" may unite with the "Byzantines" in lamenting that all the nations of the world should be pouring out their money into the desert sands to the south, in their search for the Pharaoh's mummified remains, while the city which was probably the birthplace of the Corinthian Order never hears the sound of an archaeologist's pickaxe. This is a wayward, whimsical world; but the one thing we do apparently admire is sheer age. The trouble with Byzantium, from the American point of view, is that it is not old enough.

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NEW FICTION

BY L. P. HARTLEY

- A Brood of Ducklings.* By Frank Swinnerton. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.
St. Christopher's Day. By Martin Armstrong. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.
The Hasty Marriage. By Grant Richards. Cape. 7s. 6d.
The Triumph of Youth. By Jacob Wassermann. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

ONE looks in vain in Mr. Swinnerton's later work for the passionate intensity of 'Nocturne.' That thrilling lyric cry has ceased to sound; and in its place we have orchestral effects subtle, interesting and mature, but less original.

'A Brood of Ducklings' has, however, a certain novelty of theme and treatment. It is a study of the relationships between a middle-aged man, cultivated, sensitive, well-to-do, but shunning the rough-and-tumble of life, and his two daughters. Their mother is dead. They, he thinks, are drifting away from him, and the thought wounds his acute sensitiveness; with him sensitiveness and affection are one. Rhoda and Catherine fall in love. They conduct their love-affairs with much secrecy. One does not always see the necessity for this, but it lends mystery and excitement to a novel which would otherwise be too static. Even so, one realizes at the end that the narrative is only a frame for the portrait of Ferdinand Meadows; and the frame, with all its attractive glitter, does not really suit the picture. This is the sort of man he was:

"I passed the Law Courts to-day," Ferdinand ventured, slightly shrugging, and jerking his head—it was a way he had—gently to one side, as if he were listening to the spheres. "And in fact—forgive me, my dear Edmund: I know this will be painful to you—I hurried past the Bankruptcy Court, of which I have a peculiar horror. All of them indeed make me extremely uncomfortable—as an innocent man—as an innocent man. I imagine to myself the falling of that giant arm, my own helplessness, the terrible array of skilled intelligences. I never remember where I was upon a particular day, or at any particular time; I can never answer the question, 'Yes' or 'No.'" And I should be sure to be convicted. So, as I say, I'm invariably frightened."

Here is the essential Ferdinand, revealing himself by every word he says. At no time is he more characteristic than in his encounters with the Labour organizer, Jabez, unwelcome *prétendant* to the hand of one of Ferdinand's daughters—which, so mystifying is Mr. Swinnerton, one cannot easily tell. But Ferdinand feeling the charm of the lady at the flower-shop, Ferdinand making house-to-house search for an absconding daughter, Ferdinand on the threshold of melodrama—these partial glimpses are hard to reconcile with the complete portrait.

Quis custodiet custodes? Mr. Martin Armstrong regards his art with a watchful and a jealous eye. Few contemporary novelists are less likely to elude the vigilance of their own self-criticism. If ever he makes a slip, therefore, it fairly leaps from the page, and seems to the body of his work what the heel was to Achilles:

A hundred little *flaws* of pleasure—pleasures of sight, sound, taste, smell, touch and thought—mar with rainbow jags and *flaws* the cold, pure crystal of pain.

The italics are mine. Often, when confronted by these suave pages, in which so many felicities of expression seem unaware of themselves, I have felt inclined to cry: Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null, dead perfection, no more. But these blemishes on the character of Maud cannot properly be laid as faults at Mr. Armstrong's door. He is not frigid, or theatrical, or extreme, certainly not null; he is sound and sane and balanced, and the smoothness of his surface can be an aggravation only to professional fault-finders. What *flaw*,

then, is to be found in 'St. Christopher's Day,' that record of a mere twelve hours or so in a man's life, which all the same contrives to tell his own history and his wife's, and the sequence of events which made it seem impossible for him to go on living in the same house with her? What can we set against, for instance, the amazing subtlety with which Mr. Armstrong presents abrupt transitions of mood—one of the hardest tasks the novelist has? Or against the taste which is so uniformly satisfying that one ceases to be aware of it as good taste? Or against the quietly uttered truths scattered so freely about the book, one at least of which should give the critic pause (Christopher had been a reviewer until, responding to the spur of matrimony, he had taken a more lucrative job in the City):

What was the use of all this dreary outpouring of opinions on the opinions of others? Even artistic creation, it seemed to him, was nothing more than life at second-hand; and if this were so, the reviewing and criticizing of the creative work of others was life at third hand, and the reviewing of the criticism of others was life at fourth hand—a sort of sluggish mortification. How passionately he longed to escape from this artificially induced disease of thought, to live violently and intensely with soul and body, to burn with a bright, clear flame instead of smouldering, choked down under heaps of rubbish.

Christopher, then, was dissatisfied with the life of the intellect and had vague longings to be a manual labourer. How he had arrived at this conclusion is revealed by the meditations he entertains on this critical day—his birthday—when at last he realizes that his wife dislikes him. The story is launched in the present, but it immediately hurries back into the past, and, a few brief forays into the present excepted, there remains, slightly clouded by reminiscential and elegiac emotion, until the end of the book. The narrative is, I think, insufficiently grounded in the present. One-tenth of actuality will not put into motion nine-tenths of reminiscence. And there is another thing which prevents the whole story from being as successful as the separate parts promise: the character of Rosamund is not entirely convincing. She was odious to her husband because she married him as a *pis aller*, having first loved another man, and because she had a dual nature, good and bad, in which the bad nearly always gained the upper hand. The alternations of his mood are easy to understand: of hers much less easy, for her emotions, when the story opens, had not for years been subjected to any special shock. Throughout the book Mr. Armstrong shows a tendency to regard the emotions as less certain of their direction than they commonly are; but excess of subtlety is not a fault we ought to deplore. 'St. Christopher's Day' is quite up to Mr. Armstrong's standard—a very high and exacting one.

'The Hasty Marriage' tells how the scion of an English industrial house fell in love with the daughter of an American millionaire; how her father approved the match, but his did not, and how the millionaire thought to get matters his own way by buying up the shares in the Englishman's business and dictating his own matrimonial terms. The scene moves between the Riviera and London. The book is lively in style and occasionally a little vulgar in tone. Some of the dialogue is irrelevant and not amusing in itself; but here and there appear shrewd and life-like touches. The story is written on different planes of seriousness, which give it a patchy effect.

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TO print twenty-six full-length plays for eight shillings and sixpence must be a feat unparalleled in the modern publishing of theatre-books. Naturally the print cannot be large, but a clear type is used to ease the strain. Mr. Rubinstein has made a just selection beginning with 'A Wakefield Nativity' and ending with 'Lady Windermere's Fan.' Shakespeare is omitted by policy, since every bookshelf has him, and difficulties about copyright have obviously interfered with the later choices, there being nothing of Pinero, Barker, Galsworthy, and Shaw. Interesting inclusions are 'The Yorkshire Tragedy,' 'The Old Wives' Tale,' and 'Eastward Ho!' Wycherly is not favoured, but Massinger is allowed two appearances. Mr. Rubinstein's running commentary is fresh and engaging and a great improvement on the dreary pedagogic prefaces which usually rob any vital play of its allure for the student. Mr. Rubinstein invites to pleasure, not to a holiday-task.

Nature and the Country in English Poetry of the First Half of the Eighteenth Century. By C. E. de Haas. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris. 10s.

IN the seventeenth century, and even much later, mountains were classed as "disgusting" by connoisseurs of scenery; in the twentieth the love of mountain country becomes almost a craze or, with the mountaineer, a form of spiritual experience. This revolution, and the accompanying reversal of our attitude towards nature generally, are worth enquiring into; it is so often taken for granted that our modern reaction is a natural and inborn one that it is necessary to trace its history in order to be convinced that it is not so. If not the root of our nature-worship, at any rate its earliest manifestations are to be found in the poetry of the early eighteenth century—in such works as Gray's 'Elegy' and Thomson's 'Seasons.' Thomson, although he introduced the sad plaint of the nightingale into his 'Winter,' was a faithful observer, and was undoubtedly one of the chief inspirations of Gilbert White, who wrote on the fly-leaf of each fresh volume of his *Naturalist's Journal* the apt quotation:

... I solitary court
Th' inspiring breeze; and meditate the book
Of Nature ever open. . . .

Dr. de Haas has dealt with all this family of poetry in a monumental and scholarly fashion. It is, of course, a work for the specialist, but is interestingly written and full of well-chosen quotations. An appendix of parallel passages shows with considerable erudition the phrases and similes from other writers which may have suggested phrases or lines for the 'Elegy.' Although it does not convict Gray of plagiarism, but rather demonstrates his superiority, this appendix is interesting as showing what a large school of contemporary minor poets were groping towards the same sort of thing. The Dutch publishers have evidently spared no effort over the printing and production, which do them great credit.

Chronicles of Kenya. By A. Davis and H. J. Robertson. Palmer. 7s. 6d.

SIR EDWARD NORTHEY tells us in a brief foreword that the authors of "these bold and caustic sketches" are editors of local newspapers, and that their work reflects "actual conditions and settlers' opinions." It is a pity that much of the humour intended for local consumption is bound to evaporate in crossing the ocean, and only those who have themselves lived in Kenya of recent years will be able to appreciate many of the sly hits and subtle allusions. But there is a good deal left that the English reader can enjoy—such as the amusing chapter on the town-planning expert who was instructed to draw up a scheme for rebuilding Mombasa, or the very sensible discussions of the native problem. Perhaps the most interesting sketch of all is that of the early days of the war, when the Protectorate so promptly raised an army "that looked ridiculous and fought superbly," though it did engage in a night battle against a troop of baboons and tried to justify it by saying, "Who could tell a baboon from a German in the darkness, anyhow?"

The Golden Emperor. By D. C. Wilson. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

NOBODY has written a good account of a huge store since Zola's 'Au Bonheur des Dames,' though not a few have made an attempt to do so. Mr. Wilson is one of the latest of these, and he has wisely restricted the field of his story—which deals with matters rather incidental to the life of a department store than essential to it. In fact nothing more is involved than a story of petty speculation growing with impunity and a feeble love interest. To this is added the notion of a series of mysterious subsidences in West London which threaten to become a public calamity; a notion which might have become the theme of a powerful novel if well worked out, but does not contribute to the evolution of the main thread of the book.

ACROSTICS

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 339

FOR LUXURY, GLUTTONY, AND CRUELTY KNOWN;
IGNOBLE RULERS NE'ER DISGRACED A THRONE.

1. "Fate urg'd the shears," and I was cut in twain;
 2. Nor was this needed to assuage the pain.
 3. Clothed gallant knights in days when guns were lacking.
 4. To incapacitate: the beast send packing.
 5. Curtail a fruit supposed to ripen early.
 6. Three-fifths of one with ebony hair and curly.
 7. She came, and he lay fetter'd to her eyes.
 8. A saw, concealed in which a pirate lies.
 9. In me the Greeks and Romans stored their wine.
 10. Fair building planned for services divine.
 11. Behead a warlike savage of the South.
 12. Some call it inflammation of the mouth.
- * Pope. ** Lovelace.

Solution of Acrostic No. 337

S	enla	C ¹	Known through the centuries as the
E	name	L	battle of Hastings.
M	isrul	E	Meadow-sweet, or Queen of the
I		Ona	Meadows, is <i>Spiraea Ulmaria</i> .
R	om	P	
A	si	A	
M	are's-nes	T	
I	nciso	R	
S	piræ	A ²	

ACROSTIC No. 337.—The winner is Miss Margarita Skene, Perwinnes, Kingston St. Mary, Taunton, who has selected as her prize 'The New Lotus-Eaters,' by Dorothy Buck, published by Arrowsmith and reviewed in our columns on September 1 under the title 'A Holiday in Tunisia.' Eighteen other competitors named this book, eighteen chose 'Mr. Bletsworthy on Rampole Island,' eleven 'The Legend of Ulenspiegel,' etc., etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—A. de V. Blathwayt, Boskerris, Mrs. Robt. Brown, Iago, George W. Miller, Shorwell, St. Ives, C. J. Warden, Capt. W. R. Wolseley.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Armada, Bolo, Mrs. Rosa H. Boothroyd, Mrs. J. Butler, Carlton, J. Chambers, Clam, Dhualt, G. M. Fowler, Hanworth, H. C. M., John Lennie, Madge, Margaret, Lady Mottram, N. O. Sellam, Sisyphus, Hon. R. G. Talbot, Miss Alice Towilson, H. M. Vaughan, Yendu.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—E. Barrett, Miss Carter, Chip, Crayke, Mrs. C. H. Driver, Farsdon, Frank Izod, W. P. James, Lilian, J. F. Maxwell, Miss Moore, H. de R. Morgan, Margaret Owen, Peter, F. M. Petty, Quis, Rho Kappa, Stucco, Sydney, Thora. All others more.

ACROSTIC No. 336.—ALSO CORRECT: Crayke, Lady Mottram. ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Astur, Mrs. Rosa H. Boothroyd, Buns, Ceyx, Miss Chatfield, Chip, M. East, Farsdon, Cyril E. Ford, Iago, Miss Kelly, John Lennie, Lilian, Madge, Martha, M. T., Margaret Owen, Miss F. M. Petty, Polamar, Shorwell, Stucco, C. J. Warden. All others more.

ACROSTIC No. 335.—One Light wrong: De Reske. Two wrong: Boskerris.

BOSKERRIS.—Your solution to No. 335 arrived late, and was acknowledged last week.

HANWORTH.—I think Hecho must be a mere village—cannot find any trace of it. Haro appears to be a small town, fairly well known.

OUR TWENTY-FOURTH QUARTERLY COMPETITION.—The runners-up were: A. de V. Blathwayt, Clam, Martha, and N. O. Sellam, 128 points; John Lennie, Lilian, and Yendu, 127; Boskerris and St. Ives, 126. Sisyphus solved the first eleven Acrostics correctly—a record, I think.

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Mr. John Newton, who presided, said that the company had purchased a building site at Dunham Green, near Sevenoaks, of approximately seventy acres in extent and adjoining the main line of the Southern Railway. Upon this site their main factories, etc., would be erected, and they would have sufficient available land to be able to let on lease or sell to subsidiary companies. After paying for the land, the company had about £130,000 in hand, which would be ample for all the purposes required. The plans for the building were in active preparation, and had been so designed that it would be in its way a model factory, up-to-date in every way in all methods of time and labour-saving construction. The contract for the builder to proceed would be placed within the next three or four weeks, and it was confidently anticipated that the building would be well advanced in the new year. In the meantime they were also proceeding with the construction of their special machines. These machines were of their own design, and were the last word in this class of machinery for the manufacture of their product. They were being made from their own secret and patent designs, and the machines would not be available for any other manufacturers for a similar product to their own. The building of the factory and the construction of the machinery were proceeding on parallel lines.

It would be noticed from the prospectus that the vendor company, the old J. M. Newton Vitreo-Colloid Company, had taken no cash consideration whatever for its rights, but had accepted payment in shares, and to the shareholders who had subscribed cash priority was given not only in the question of dividend, but also in the question of the assets of the company. Nothing would deter the directors from urging forward the construction work, and they confidently anticipated that the shareholders would not have to wait over long before they would get a return—a substantial return—on the amount of capital involved.

COMPANY'S SIDE LINES

Since the company was formed very great progress had been made in developing side lines, which would be of considerable profit and a source of revenue when manufacturing was started. They had at present three or four what he might call side lines, patents for which had been applied for, and which would no doubt be granted in due course, for the use of Vitreo-Colloid in many ways. He could assure the shareholders that the patents were of considerable value, and would prove to be tremendous assets to the company. They ranged from matters dealing with wireless, for electrical work, and one or two other important commodities, and they were already assured from the investigations made that they would meet with a ready sale, which would yield profits quite outside their main manufacture.

Already a contract had been arranged with the eminent firm of motor accessories manufacturers, Messrs. Beaton and Co., whose name was noted for efficiency in the motor accessory world, in which they were appointed sole agents for the sale of Vitreo-Colloid for the use of the motor industry. There was waiting here an enormous market for the company, and the importance Messrs. Beaton and Co. attached to this contract would have been observed from their statements in the Press. It was hoped to exhibit Vitreo-Colloid at the forthcoming motor show, and from the enquiries already received there was undoubtedly a market awaiting the company when the works started on a mass production scale. They had also fixed a contract with Messrs. Murray and Co., wholesale chemical and medical distributors, for the dealing of their material for bottle sealing, etc., and this particular line was already on the market, and they were convinced there would be a ready demand once its advantages were known. Negotiations were proceeding with the establishment of works closely connected with the works at Sevenoaks for the manufacture by a separate concern, under which the company would have a contract for the supply on most advantageous terms of their raw material.

One particular form of their manufacture was now under test with the largest electrical people for the purposes of insulation, and it was anticipated as the result of their experiments that important contracts would be entered into when the company was ready to supply their demands. It was almost impossible to put a limit to the usefulness of the company's products. Many experiments had taken place which would prove that they would be able to adapt their production for moulding purposes, and from this source they anticipated a very big business.

The chairman having replied to questions, the proceedings terminated.

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MOTORING

By W. H. STIRLING

CAR manufacturers are now giving us some advance information about their 1929 programmes and the models we may expect to see staged next month at Olympia. Bean cars will have five models on show, two being the 14/45 h.p. cars and the other three are new sports models, viz., a 14/70 "Hadfield" sports saloon, priced at £495; a 14/70 sports tourer at £435; and a 14/70 h.p. sports coupé at £498. These sports models are capable of 50 m.p.h. on third speed and over 70 m.p.h. on top. The wonder Servo motor, 4-wheel brakes and Triplex glass are fitted to them all. The 14/45 engine has "Ricardo" cylinder heads, producing a turbulence of the gases in the combustion chamber; this is claimed to effect more complete atomization of the mixture with a consequently greater power output. Prices are: 14/45 h.p. Tourer, £295; Coach or Fabric Saloon, £395; "Hadfield" Sports Saloon, £495; Sports Tourer, £435; Sports Coupé, £498.

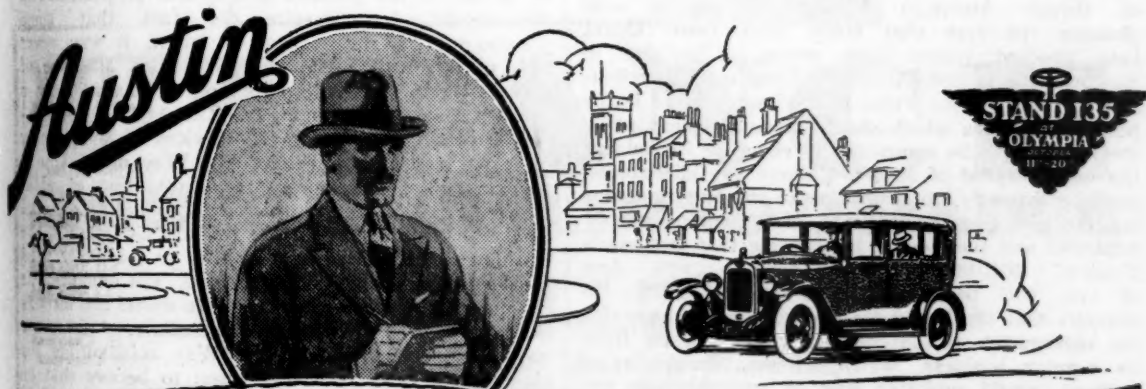
* *

The Standard Motor Company are keeping well to the front and the 9 h.p. model will be known in future as the "Teignmouth," with a 7-in. longer wheel base than the previous "Nine." This car is fitted with a sliding roof and the upholstery is of leather cloth. The price is £215. The new Standard 15 h.p. six-cylinder Saloon is being marketed at a most attrac-

tive price: £325. This model has been going through strenuous tests for the last six months and I understand its performance is of an extremely satisfactory character. A brief description of the engine shows seven bearings to the crankshaft, Duralumin connecting rods; pistons of the split strut type; gear-box with four speeds and forming a unit with the engine; suspension is by means of half elliptic springs, with shock absorbers built in, two rebound leaves being attached to the top of the master leaf. This car will be known as the "Exmouth." Wire wheels and some other luxuries are supplied in a "Special" model. The 14/28 Farnham Saloon is listed at £280 and the 18/42 h.p. Folkestone at £440.

* *

There has been a good deal written lately about the proper method of procedure for motorists at cross roads, and various proposals have been put forward. Some advocate what is known as the "offside" rule, but the only guide is common sense. There is no common sense in racing across where two roads of almost equal importance intersect, because the other car may possibly do the same. Common sense dictates that where one cannot see what is coming, the proper thing to do is to go "dead slow" until the road is clear. It is obviously worth while losing a second or two to avoid a possible smash—one may get safely across ninety-nine times but what of the hundredth? In many cases it is difficult to decide definitely which of two roads that cross each other is the main road: on the outskirts of a town one is often faced with this problem.



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A.J.W.

THE CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday

IT does not often happen that shareholders receive the first report of a company and find that progress exceeds expectations in the prospectus. This, however, has been achieved by Greaves Bull and Lakin (Harbury Works) Limited. In their first report they show gross profits, after paying all trading expenses, maintenance and repairs, of £90,175. With commendable caution the directors have decided to place £20,000 to reserve for depreciation of property and plant; they are declaring a dividend of 12½% on their ordinary shares—a result which is certainly extremely satisfactory. The Greaves Bull and Lakin Company is one of the Red Triangle "Dependability" Cement companies, all of which are under the guidance of Mr. Henry S. Horne. Mr. Horne is to be congratulated on the success of his group of companies, a success built upon sound foundations. In the City Mr. Horne is looked upon as an able financier; he can also be described as a very able industrialist. He recognizes that there are three parties to be considered in the industry of the country: the employer, the employee, and the consumer. The happy balance that he maintains between the three has led to the consumer being so satisfied that he uses his products, the employee so contented that he gives of his best, and the employer rewarded in receiving a very adequate return in the form of substantial dividends.

TOBACCO

As a firm advocate of the shares of the Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland and of British American Tobacco, I record with pleasure the fact that lately both these shares have touched record high prices. The rise in the price of British American Tobacco is attributable to three factors. First, to the improvement in the position in China which should advantageously affect the revenue of the company, by virtue of its holding the entire capital of several Chinese subsidiary companies. Secondly, to realization of the fact that during the last year the earnings of the company have expanded and therefore it is probable that last year's dividend distribution, amounting to 25% free of tax, will be increased to 26½%. Lastly, to rumours that the Board are considering a scheme for the segregation of the company's share assets from its regular business, which scheme, should it be realized, would probably lead to something in the nature of a bonus to shareholders. As regards the Imperial Tobacco Company, the rise in these shares is due partly to the fact that the company's earnings this year are likely to exceed those of last year—despite the fact that the extra tobacco tax included in the 1927 Budget, last year, only affected the company for six months out of twelve—and partly to the knowledge that sooner or later the long-awaited bonus distribution on the company's shares will have to be made, and that this bonus distribution may quite possibly be made this year. These are the reasons why Bats and Imps are in demand at high prices, and because the reasons are sound and based on very tangible facts, it will be surprising if the prices of both shares do not reach higher levels in due course.

SOME INDUSTRIAL SELECTIONS

The demand for industrial shares continues, and although the market has been kept healthy by occasional set-backs in price, it seems probable that certain counters will be standing even higher than at present by the end of the year. Among the industrial shares which come in this category I

class: United Molasses, Thomas Tilling, Joseph Lucas, Associated Anglo-Atlantics, British Cement Products, Associated News deferred, Watney Combe Reid deferred, Swedish Matches, and the Tobacco shares referred to above. Those who favour an oil investment should not overlook the potentialities of Trinidad Leaseholds, while in the mining market one might place Union Corporation and Burma Corporation. Investors would be well advised to leave the many new favourites alone and to make their selection from the above companies, all of which have past achievement in addition to future possibilities.

Reference was made in these notes last week to the activity in gramophone shares, and Duophones were especially referred to as possessing great possibilities. These shares have since had a further substantial rise, and indications point to the likelihood of their going still further. As a speculation, therefore, they appear still to possess great possibilities.

ARISTON MINES

The Gold Coast owes its name to the fact that some two or three hundred years ago the bulk of the gold which reached Europe came from this part of West Africa. Despite this fact, during the last thirty years probably more money has been lost in West African gold-mining ventures than in any other field in the world. The gold is undoubtedly there, but the country has been hampered by lack of transport facilities and by the absence of a process which would allow the ore to be mined at a reasonably low cost. I refer to this subject to-day because it is claimed that one mine in West Africa has overcome this working costs difficulty. The mine in question belongs to the Ariston Company and was formerly known as Prestea Block "A." The Prestea Mine was acknowledged to be one of the greatest gold-quartz propositions in the world, but despite the fact that some £2,000,000 had been spent on plant, it was never able to pay a dividend and eventually, all hope of success having been despaired of, it was sold for a song to the Ariston Company. The Ariston Company was fortunate in securing the services of an engineer of great repute, Mr. Way. Mr. Way decided on a programme of development and alteration of plant which necessitated the raising of some £400,000. This was provided, and the Ariston Company's ore is about to be treated in a manner so far never used in West Africa which, if successful, will revolutionize the question of working costs. The slimes are already being treated by the process successfully. Within the next six months, should Mr. Way substantiate his claims—and there is every reason to believe that he will do so—a 10 pennyweight mine on the Gold Coast will become a paying proposition. It is for this reason that Ariston shares have been in renewed demand of late and why those closely connected with the Gold Coast have prophesied a fresh lease of life for the gold mines in that Colony in the near future.

MEURISSE LIMITED

My attention has been drawn to the progress that is being made by Meurisse Limited, the Belgian chocolate manufacturers, which business has been established in Antwerp since 1845. The company's products have always been popular on the Continent and there is said to be an increasing demand in this country. Recently the business has been extended by the acquisition of Wm. Frank Limited, of Cardiff, a company which owns a chain of confectionery shops in the West of England. The capital of Meurisse Limited is divided into preference and ordinary shares, and, in view of the progress which is being made, they can both be said to possess possibilities at the present level.

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